

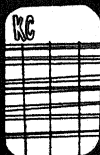


917.14 D67q  
Donald

1041643

917.14 D67q 1041643  
Donald \$3.25  
Quebec patchwork

kansas city



public library

kansas city, missouri

Books will be issued only  
on presentation of library card.

Please report lost cards and  
change of residence promptly.

Card holders are responsible for  
all books, records, films, pictures  
or other library materials  
checked out on their cards.

KANSAS CITY, MO. PUBLIC LIBRARY











## QUEBEC PATCHWORK



# QUEBEC PATCHWORK

*by*

J. M. DONALD

*Illustrated by  
the Author*



TORONTO: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF  
CANADA LIMITED, AT ST. MARTIN'S HOUSE

1940

Copyright, Canada, 1940

*by*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA  
LIMITED

All rights reserved—no part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review written for inclusion in a magazine or newspaper

To  
F R W R G  
Without whom this Patchwork  
would never have been written

May 11th 1940





# CONTENTS

| Patch  | Page |
|--|------|
| 1 THE PATTERN - - - - -                      | 1    |
| 2 BURLAP—Tabac Canadien - - - - -            | 2    |
| 3 RED FLANNEL—The Road to Kasabasua - - -    | 13   |
| 4 TARTAN—St. Andrews on the Ottawa - - -     | 22   |
| 5 CREPE—The Heroes - - - - -                 | 30   |
| 6 MONKSCLOTH—The Trappist Monks of Oka - - - | 40   |
| 7 BROADCLOTH—Montreal - - - - -              | 51   |
| 8 VELVETEEN—Trois Rivières - - - - -         | 65   |
| 9 CREWEL-WORK—The Voyageurs - - - - -        | 78   |
| 10 DUNGAREE—Trailer Tales - - - - -          | 99   |
| 11 SHADOWCLOTH—Quebec Evensong - - - - -     | 120  |
| 12 NUNSVEILING—The Ursuline Nuns - - - - -   | 133  |
| 13 BUCKSKIN—An Indian Theme - - - - -        | 145  |
| 14 WOOL—The Shrine of Good Sainte Anne - - - | 164  |
| 15 HOMESPUN—Threads of Homespun - - - - -    | 179  |
| 16 CORDUROY—Roadsong - - - - -               | 194  |
| 17 WATERED SILK—The Deep River - - - - -     | 205  |
| 18 GREEN BAIZE—The Kingdom of Saguenay - - - | 221  |
| 19 GROSGRAIN—Then and Now - - - - -          | 240  |
| 20 SURGICAL GAUZE—The Healing Arts - - - - - | 251  |
| 21 AMERICAN CLOTH—Quebec Interlude - - - - - | 259  |
| 22 FUSTIAN—The South Shore - - - - -         | 269  |
| 23 PILOT CLOTH—Harbour History - - - - -     | 290  |
| 24 WHITE LAWN—Tercentenary - - - - -         | 299  |
| 25 BATISTE—Ile d'Orleans - - - - -           | 312  |
| 26 SACKCLOTH—Mill of Gentilly - - - - -      | 329  |
| 27 HESSIAN—Richelieu River Song - - - - -    | 341  |
| 28 SAMITE—Among the Saints - - - - -         | 356  |
| 29 THE FINISHING - - - - -                   | 366  |



## QUEBEC PATCHWORK



# THE PATTERN

IF, AS the dictionary says, a Patchwork is something "Variegated, many-coloured, miscellaneous," this book is indeed well named

On the other hand *Synonyms and Antonyms* thoughtlessly adds the definitions "Piebald," "clouded," and "flea-bitten " I hope not! To be the perpetrator of a flea-bitten book appeals to neither Robin nor I, and Dogdog does not associate the definition with literature.

So this "Variegation," this "Chameleon," this "Ollapodrida" of impressions, ideas, and imaginations, must be viewed with the same indulgence as your Grandmamma's first patchwork quilt, produced at the age of eight. The pieces between these covers, like Grandmamma's, are strangely assorted, of peculiar shapes, and somewhat uneven; but, whereas the Little-Old-Lady-as-a-Girl made her patchwork on a backing of strong muslin, this motley is fashioned on the Homespun that is Quebec.

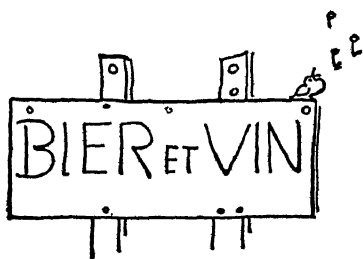
The pattern is very simple, the patches light (made mostly out of travel clothes, sun-suits, and the faded brocades of the past), quilted together into a home-made escape gear, enabling one to forget the income tax, or that persistent man who comes from the Government to collect all sorts of licences!

"On with the motley!"



## BURLAP—TABAC CANADIEN

A STORM was brewing one day as we came towards Joliette, and a deep ominous stillness, without bird song, enveloped the villages and farmlands. The stifling heat pressed down on all the country-side, and the tall, green tobacco leaves wilted on the stalk. Everywhere men sat in the shade of barns, fanning themselves with big straw "cow-feed" hats, while the usually busy fingers of the women on every verandah were listlessly idle. Even the little children were too hot to play. Clouds massed on the horizon began to rise, and soon the whole sky was upholstered in overstuffed copper-coloured, cumulous clouds full of suppressed thunder. As we reached Joliette, the storm broke.



There are usually about two storms in Quebec each season that are devastating to crops and damaging to property. Later we were to meet the second outside Lavaltrie, but it was not so serious. This storm flattened

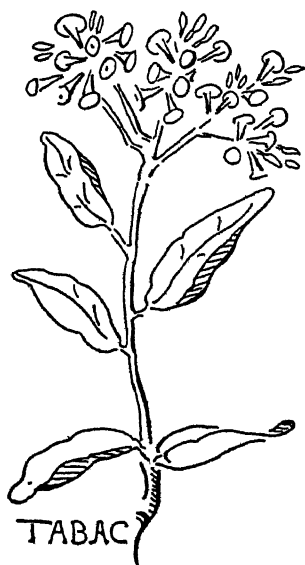
acres of green tobacco, took roofs off barns, flooded roads and, near Joliette, two large trees blocked the way, so that we had to wait while the farm hands hacked off the tops to make a passage for our caravan. The car and

trailer had withstood the elemental onslaught well, and no damage appeared when we finally stopped for an inspection. It was a lovely spot on a rain-washed hillside, with a view of blue Laurentians in the distance, and neatly spaced farms in the immediate lower foreground. We wondered about the first white farmers who ploughed all this fertile valley in the not-so-distant past. At that time, the savage Iroquois infested all the lands from the Richelieu River below Montreal to the Ottawa and Gati-neau valleys above. Starting a farm among the warring tribes was a high-pressure business for any Frenchman, and no course in homemaking ever invented could prepare the pioneer housewife for the vicissitudes of house-keeping in those days. But even the wild Indians were afraid of thunder storms; so afraid that they invented an explanation to cheer themselves up as they cowered in their war canoes under the lash of such a storm as the one just passing.

With true Indian philosophy, the medicine men explained it all very satisfactorily. It seems that the thunder is a man in the guise of a turkey-cock; the sky is his palace and he stays in it when the air is clear and calm. When the clouds begin to roll and grumble, he descends to the earth and becomes very busy gathering snakes and general odds and ends. (The Indians call the things "Okies" but what the property of an "Okie" was, or why the turkey-cock thunder should be so keen to have them, is not explained.) Anyway, the lightning flashes are when he opens and shuts his great wings, the thunder is his

gobble-gobble cry, and if it is a very noisy storm, like the one at Joliette, that means that the turkey-gobbler has his brood of young with him.

The young turkeys were still gobbling around the far horizon but the wing-flapping lightning was over and the smell of drowned, hot earth rose in steamy waves from the road and wet fields.



This is the great tobacco-growing district, and it is said that the export trade in Canadian grown tobacco is becoming something to be reckoned as a national industry these days. It was not so long ago that the dry, sandy barrens on the hill-tops behind Trois Rivières, and around Joliette, were considered useless, a mere few thousands of acres from which some thoughtless glacier had removed all the stuff that is needful for farmland. The wise *habitant* farmer settled elsewhere. Then, one

day, some inquiring genius brought a tobacco plant and put it in the sandy soil to see what happened. What happened was rather like Jack's famous beanstalk. Millions of tall tobacco plants wave in the sunny fields, and the returns from these glacial hill-tops is joy and thanksgiving to the *habitant* who harvests a perfect crop. Of



course, it is by no means certain that the crop will survive such storms as the one just mentioned, although next day most of the apparently ruined fields were brilliantly green and upright again, seemingly all the better for the terrific deluge.

This is all commercial tobacco, but every French-Canadian farmer has a patch of "*tabac*" for himself; a small store of future enjoyment in a strictly utilitarian vegetable garden. I think the same idea applies to the masses of hardy flowers in the cottage front-yards all over Quebec—a patch of bright-coloured pleasure in a hard-working life.

Once, in the fall, we saw an aged *habitant*, his white whiskers falling over a red shirt, laying out the "*tabac*" to dry. The Ancient laid each large, flat leaf carefully upon a drying rack in the full blaze of the noonday sun, his wooden clogs banging over the hard-baked clay of the farmyard as he crossed from cart to rack with precious armfuls. On other open racks were dry brown leaves, almost ready for the curing chimney, from which a waft of pungent blue smoke wound lazily into the still air. The bright-shirted Ancient lovingly laid the last broad spearhead on the rack and turned a rheumy eye on us.

"What want you?" he demanded suspiciously.

"You are very clever," countered Robin rapidly. "It's very difficult to dry tobacco correctly." He paused, and the temperature rose perceptibly. The Ancient beamed.

"Me, I am of a great cleverness," he said modestly. "I

am of more cleverness than all the parish—except,” he paused, “perhaps Emile Gagnon—he—yes, he is of a great cleverness also.”

“Never—no, certainly—impossible.”

At that the Ancient offered Robin a fill of *tabac* that he produced from a pull-string bag carefully hung on a nail in the barn. The *tabac* looked like a long-vacated bird’s nest of uncertain origin put through a hamburger machine, and smelt like the burning greatcoat of a discharged Foreign Legionnaire.

Both men seemed to be enjoying this typically French-Canadian gas attack. Perhaps I am not quite robust enough, or something, but covered by a smoke screen of the utmost pungency, I withdrew in good order to the trailer and lay down. Some time later Robin appeared.

“There’s a tobacco with hair on its chest,” said he robustly. He coughed. “That’s a man’s smoke for you,” he said, coughing slightly. “Here’s to the good old home-cured *tabac* of the *habitant*,” said a rather pale voice behind the smoke. “Give me “*Tabac Cana—*,” prolonged coughing, followed by gaspings and raucous hissings, interrupted this eulogy.

In the evening on the lower road towards Charlemagne, we stopped at a wayside store.

“Some tobacco, please,” said Robin.

“But certainly, Monsieur.” The woman handed out a “*sac*” of “*Rose Quenelle Tabac.*”

Robin paled. “No,” he said, faintly, “Give me Sweet Caporal, Finecut, Mild.”

"There isn't any hair on Sweet Cap's chest," I reminded him.

"Don't care," said he, "I like bald chests best"; and we crossed the bridge onto Montreal Island.

Montreal itself is so vast, so well known and so very well publicized that there is not much for a patchwork observer to remark of the modern city. Its fine buildings and great commercial piers extend for miles. Its uniquely beautiful Mountain Park lifts a misty head into the evening sky. On the high slope of the Mountain a vivid white cross twinkles out suddenly against a turquoise glow; even above the tumult of a great city, half a hundred church bells ring out the evening hour from belfrys that prick the sunset skyline.

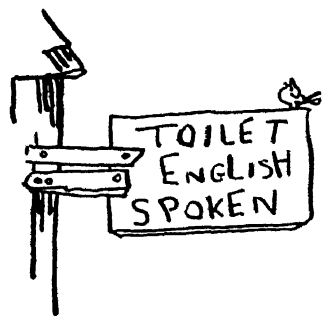
So we left Montreal that evening, and, looking back from a distance, saw the million and one lights of the lovely metropolis spread in a shimmering veil at the foot of Mount Royal; and over all, the star-spangled blue velvet of the summer sky.

\*            \*            \*

Trailing about the countryside in this section of Quebec is not without its charm, nor is it without its vicissitudes. Much enjoyment was caused to the rural countryside in the Hull-Blue Sea Lake-Lachute-Joliette-Montreal-Oka and St. Andrews districts, and on the various occasions that we ventured down a side road and found ourselves mired, ditched, entranced, waterless, annoyed, amazed, delighted or embarrassed, the *habitant*

gave us welcome, both as a money-making concern and as unlooked-for entertainment. We thought of charging admission to the trailer, or that a barter system might work—see one small dog, pay six eggs—or view one trailer, one quart milk, and a homemade loaf.

It was on one such "mystery cruise" week-end in the trailer that we found ourselves in a delightful little plage-camp in front of a farm. The farm family whom we had understood to be Belgians, due to frequent allusions to "*La Belge*" by a man by the roadside, turned out to greet us, and we encountered absolute not-one-word-of-English



French Canadians. Not even "cat," "dog," "apple," "yes," "no." In this case it was rather remarkable, as three generations greeted us, and usually the children can say a few words. I started a flow of the execrable French for which I am renowned. The three gener-

erations retaliated in chorus. Not to be outdone, I shouted even louder, and about this time the dogs started a fight.

We eventually discovered that

- (a) We were all good friends;
- (b) They were not Belgians, but there was a Belgian settlement over the hill, and
- (c) Fifty cents allowed us to park in the grove on the shore of the Lake of Two Mountains.

This was in the early days of our caravan enterprise, and we were very green. However, the trailer made up for the night is very comfortable, and all would have been peace that night but for Dogdog, the Sealyham. He informed us that his was not a pioneering breed; that the floor was no place for a gently nurtured hound, and that he needed exercise. He took this all night in an infuriating claw-clicking amble, up and down the four feet of floor between the beds.

The early morning mist off the lake was chilly, but by seven-thirty the sun was shining, and we felt breakfast minded. Having eaten most of our supplies the night before, I was forced to gird on my conversational armour and demand some fresh eggs. That went over well with our cheerful hosts. "*Des œufs*" flew from mouth to mouth into the dark interior of the farm. Lamentations from within. Alas! But impossible! But too, too tragic! Everyone was desolate! We had eaten the only spare half-dozen eggs last night. The desolation spread to us as we looked a breakfastless morning in the gullet. The horror of the thing dried up my tongue, and a heavy silence fell. At this moment Gran'mère appeared, no one knew from where, verbose, glorious, with six assorted eggs.

"*Voici les œufs de la Gran'mère,*" yelled the generations.

"*Viva Gran'mère!*" bawled we; and as breakfast proceeded, we felt that Gran'mère was undoubtedly a remarkable woman!

Fortified, we went upon our haphazard way, having been given a royal send-off by the generations. The yells of farewell so shattered the peace that a flock of disgruntled duck rose, screaming, from the placid waters, and arrowed across the lake.

We paused at a village garage, and had the car and the trailer looked over. The place was full of tools, pumps, gauges, ladders, tires, and oil stains. And above a crowded workbench, between an oily cap and an assortment of monkey wrenches, hung a beautifully wrought

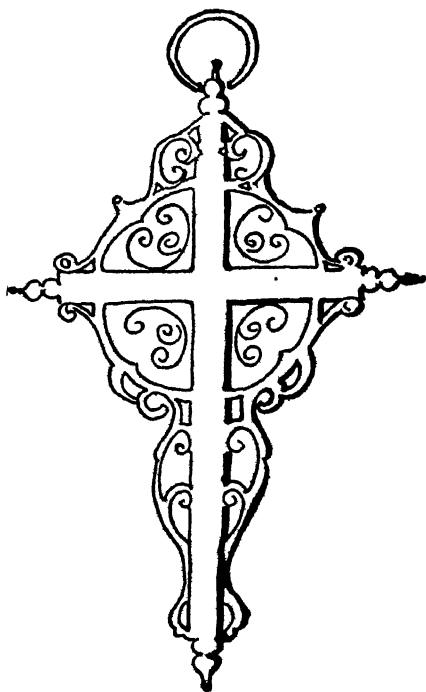
silver crucifix. The genial, dark-eyed proprietor-mechanic saw my eyes on the ornament.

"That," he said, "is of great age. Does Madame not think it beautiful?"

"I do indeed. It is a lovely piece of work. Have you had it a long time?"

The dark eyes twinkled, and the habitant-mechanic laughed. "Madame, me, I am very proud to have that crucifix."

"How so?"



"At Mal Baie my first ancestor he come almost two hundred fifty years ago. He marry a soldier's daughter, see you. That soldier he have save the life of his *Capitaine* from the Iroquois Indian, near Montreal one time—so—what is it? The *Capitaine* have given this crucifix to his lifesaver, and that brave soldier he has given the *Capitaine's* silver crucifix to his only daughter when she marry my ancestor at Mal Baie."

"Has it always been in your family?"

"But yes."

"Why has it never been damaged?"

"Ha, Ha!" he laughed again, "That!" He turned to Robin. "Fill-her-up-with-gas?" he asked briskly. While the gasoline swished into the tank he continued his tale. "See you, Madame, for nearly one hundred year after the English have take Quebec that crucifix she is buried down the well. Ver' safe, everyone forget after the farm she is burnt and the English she is take the old seigniory and call him new name, Murray Bay. You know?"

"Yes, I know; what happened then?"

"Long time — one hundred year — my Grand-père is young and he read good and write good, ver' clever, for the priest teach him. So—" he paused, "fill-up-eight gallon-by-gar," he announced, and switched off the pump.

"What happened?" I was determined to hear the end of the story before we left the garage. It was a colourful tale.

"Yes." He carefully counted out the change. "Yes, truly, my Grand-père one day find in a paper, ver' old,

how something she is buried in the well at Mal Baie; only Grand-père he is in Quebec working for River boats up there to Ottawa." He pointed up the lake. "But he go down one time, ver' quiet, to Mal Baie. One ver' dark night he go to old farm where he read is the well—" Another customer drew up in an aged car. "And that is where he is find my so beautiful crucifix." He ended hurriedly, and rushed off.

"That car probably came out of the well, too, judging by appearances," laughed Robin. It ruined the end of as good a story, true or false, as we have ever heard from the Arabian Nights, Hans Andersen, or even Baron Munchausen. Also, I have a passing suspicion that the ancestry of that crucifix was German silver, out of Birmingham! Obviously the day of the village teller of stories is by no means over!

Very soon we were looking back on the lovely panorama of Lake-of-Two-Mountains from the road near La Trappe. Within a few miles on that bit of hill-top high-road can be seen two of the most enchanting panoramic views in Quebec. The lake and islands, with farms below, to the westward; and easterly, away over the River lands and green water-meadows, the great dome of St. Joseph's Oratory standing, high upon its hill-top, white against the smoke of industrial Montreal.



# RED FLANNEL—THE ROAD TO KASABASUA

“Along the road from 'Bord de Ploffe  
To Kasabasua—”

THAT sound has always fascinated me,” said Robin. “We’ve been to 'Bord de Ploffe and now let’s go to Kas-a-bas-ua.” He hummed the refrain of Drummond’s poem to the sound of a starting motor engine.

It was a very hot Sunday, and the heat haze made a shimmering, iridescent curtain between us and the high skyline of Ottawa behind. The bells of the Peace Tower chimed the hour, deep-throated, the traditional Westminster chimes followed us as we crossed the Chaudière Falls Bridge from Ottawa to Hull, and so into the Province of Quebec.

Robin was still muttering in his whiskers about 'Bord de Ploffe and our Passenger had just discovered it on the map. But Kasabasua was another matter. Everyone knew it was somewhere up the Gatineau Valley, but it was really too hot to worry, so we just turned up the road and drifted along. Naturally, this “Why worry?” attitude led us onto the wrong road, and we found ourselves at Gatineau Point, a picturesque village of parti-coloured houses, built along the edge of the water. Here two rivers meet, the Gatineau running into the Ottawa, with the headland of Gatineau Point between the two. In autumn the river is filled with pulp logs, floated down from the camps up the Gatineau.

It is amazing to watch the skill of the loggers and raftsmen, jumping about on bobbing bits of slippery wood, prodding a bit here, or shoving a chunk somewhere else, all to the accompaniment of lusty shouts and much expectoration. It has struck us in all our wanderings through the ancient province how cheerfully the *habitant* works; not in silence, looking glum, with an ear for the dinner whistle, but with lusty song the noisy gangs of colourfully clad workmen shout away the hours, labouring mightily.

But there were no loggers at the Point to-day; not only because it was a Sunday, but also because there were no logs down yet. Instead, the men sat about at ease under the trees that border the river, and sniffed the good smell coming from the home kitchen, where the wives sweltered over cooking stoves trimmed with bright nickel, to get a suitable Sunday dinner for the family. The pungent fumes of *Tabac Canadienne* and roasting pork combined to give a truly *habitant* aroma, as we reversed and tried again for the "Road to Kasabasua."

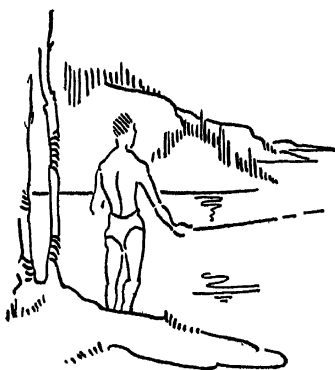
All up the Gatineau Valley, the churches and golf links were full, and there are a number of each. The clients on the latter must have been hot, but the congregations coming out of every village church looked hotter. At first we thought it was the oppression of Sunday black clothes, but the Passenger suggested it was a series of stinging sermons delivered by a priest with prickly heat! Whatever the reason, we were glad to leave the hot-looking village and drift further up the valley. The Passenger, being very clever at navigation, had by now found on the map

the village of our dreams, the illusive Kasabasua; also a lake alleged to be on the roadside some miles this side of the village. On we went in the heat, beginning to think of the picnic lunch with cooling drinks in bottles, and crispy lettuce in sandwiches, but neither the lake nor Kasabasua materialized. Suddenly we shot up an incline and, heralded only by a hot dog stand, came the sudden end of the magic trail "From 'Bord de Ploffe to

Kasabasua." A trim village, totally unpicturesque, complete with gas pump, general store, and the hot dog stand, it stood neat and modern, on either side of our road, utterly unromantic in every way! We drifted back to the Passenger's lake and found contentment. We ate under tall pines, and the lake water lapped peacefully.

The Gatineau Valley in autumn is a never-to-be-forgotten miracle of colour. Folding hills press down to the water, covered in every shade and graduation of colour from green, through yellow to gold, to scarlet and down to deep, rich purple-crimson. The maples flame in shouting splendour up the hillsides, and slim, silvery birches hold a million golden coins upon a tracery of delicate branches; sombre, abiding evergreens stand sentinel among the flaunting foliage, the steadfast guardians of the winter woods.

"Oh faithful pine, oh faithful pine,  
Green are thy leaves for ever,



Not only green in summer's prime  
But in the snowy winter time,  
Oh faithful pine, faithful thou art for ever."

And in autumn the faithful pulpwood is cached in the up-river shallows, ready to float down on the flood tides when the rains start, so that the agile raftsmen of Gatineau Point can sort the wood ready for the mills at Chaudière Falls. Thereafter we can get matches in neat boxes labelled "Maple Leaf Matches. Eddy's Ltd., Hull, P.Q."

From the glory of the Gatineau in the autumn to the Maple Leaf match all the year round!

"Isn't Nature wonderful?"

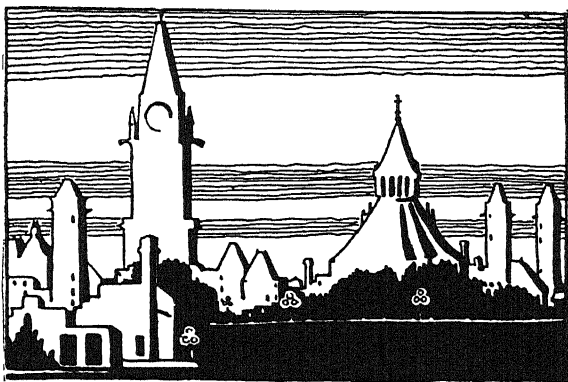
"Have you got a match?" The conversational coins jingle.

"Just look at that marvellous hillside of trees."

"This is the mill. See the pulp logs going through the machines." The currency of conversation passes about the Gatineau country to the sound of axe and rotary saw, and the forests cry out unheard for the conservation of their richness, lest a time come when there are no Maple Leaf Matches in Eddy's Ltd., Hull, P.Q.

Returning that stifling, hot Sunday, the towers of Ottawa in the distance were impressive, and with a dignity befitting the Capital City—the horizontal rays of the westerning sun catching the jade green of the weathered copper roofs, and the new copper gleaming from the half-finished roof of the Justice Building. That building will always be associated with the lovely, smiling Queen, who, on a May day of 1939, patted the great foundation stone

into its appointed place, her mist-blue dress much the colour of the heat haze rising from the River this July evening.



\* \* \*

The portion of Quebec Province that runs back from the Ottawa River is as full of history as it is of agriculture, and that's very full. All the way from Hull to Montreal the farming communities abound, and other things abound too, side roads and honey bees, and a peculiar breed of heather mixture horse, and children in pink frocks, and the pollarded poplars of Papineauville.

Grenville on the Ottawa, its four-square stone houses standing about an imitation market square, is redolent of the days of the Regency, the eighteen-twenties, in England, and somewhat of an anachronism at first sight. If it is true, and it undoubtedly is, that parts of Quebec are more French than France, then it is also true that the undeniable stamp of Georgian England remains on Gren-

ville and the few miles of canal down to Carillon

Between the road and the River hereabouts stands a most charming little Protestant Church, "St. Mungo's," creeper-grown and weathered, with a peaceful graveyard, lovingly tended, about it, a true "God's Acre" of restful quiet.

Here the river becomes a tempestuous torrent, crashing down the rapids of the Long Sault for miles, and it is here that the Royal Engineers, out from England in 1819, started to build the now famous Grenville Canal. Navigation by way of the Ottawa River was a difficult but necessary matter in those days, and was the only means of commercial and military communication between Montreal and Ottawa, then called Bytown. Until the Engineers completed the canal beside the Long Sault, passengers and freight came up from Montreal to Carillon at the foot of the rapids. There everything was transferred to a small gauge railway which puffed its leisurely way up to Grenville. Again everything was transferred back to a river boat and eventually the weary passengers and much-handled freight arrived at Bytown. The coming of the Engineers must have been a mixed blessing to the railway owners, who foresaw the end of their monopoly, but by the time the troops had built substantial barracks here and there along the route of canal, the railway people were more or less resigned to share their profits with the about-to-be canal ships, and so it came to pass. The railway functioned for years after the canal was finished, and the old Engineers' Barracks building at Carillon was used

as the railway hotel. Now the reconditioned Barracks is a fine museum, and in it are many things associated with the early days of the Grenville-Carillon-St. Andrews district.

Between Grenville (where I saw a grey cut-stone house, with a Georgian porch and wrought iron balcony, that I would like to possess) and St. Philipe, we came upon a little side road and that, of course, was fatal. We were lost, but lost in a charming place of wild strawberries, warm from the sun, and brilliant orange marsh daisies and (not to my liking) the largest snake I have ever seen basking on a rock in a swamp. I saw him first, and by the time he must have seen me I wasn't there to see who saw which! One mighty leap took me into the car, where I sat on my feet until Robin got over his unfeeling laughter.



"Delightful spot, don't you think?" he inquired, with his mouth full of wild strawberries.

"The strawberries aren't bad." I conceded this much. A strawberry-chewing silence followed.

"Ambrosial." Robin swallowed the last red morsel "A very Eden, that place."

"Yes, snake and all," said I, bitterly.

We drove on. Drifting along the road towards

Lachute, we came upon a completely air-conditioned house, with only four walls and no roof. Sitting there inside a window-frame, was a woman, busily working a sewing machine. Presumably "running up" a roof, or just plain keeping open house, perhaps!

Lachute is the place one always gets to whenever one starts to go anywhere in the Ottawa Valley district, or so it seems to us. Lachute-Montreal main highway, Lachute-St. Andrews-Oka road by the river; but this day we took the Lachute-Joliette road, and came to the village of St. Lin, where the great French-Canadian statesman, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, was born; the man who guided the ship of State through many storms, until the final tornado of the Great War of 1914-1918 found an ageing diplomat ready, but not physically strong enough to weather such stress. A great and picturesque figure was added to the Canadian background when Wilfrid Laurier of St. Lin went to join his ancestors.

It was a terribly hot day. A thermometer on the general store verandah registered ninety-two degrees in the shade, and everything was damp to the touch. The flies were pestilential, and of a tenacity almost unbelievable. They crawled and swarmed and clung and buzzed into, onto, over everything in that hot, dusty street, until we were driven to distraction. In the car it was a choice between dying of suffocation or enduring the flies. We did neither longer than was necessary for the buying of some cigarettes and inquiring about roads. As we drove out of the village, we became acutely aware that a cattle market,



or some such fly-fest, had been in progress that day. I wonder if the flies drove Sir Wilfrid Laurier out of St. Lin into politics?

#### PATCH 4

### TARTAN—ST. ANDREWS ON THE OTTAWA

**D**RIVING one day in June along the Ottawa River road, we came to Montebello and the famous Seignior Club.

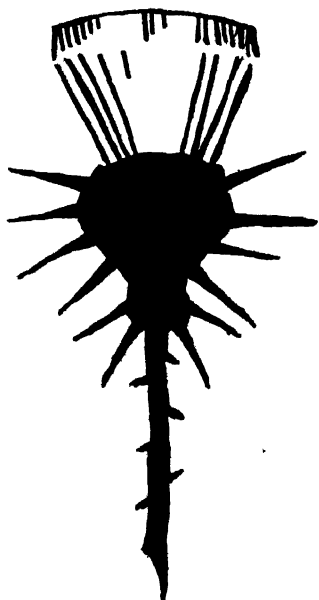
Here, to the huge estate converted into a Country Club de Luxe come sport enthusiasts all the year round. The rustic "camps" of a surpassing comfort and luxury are the envy of all beholders, and the clubhouse itself is picturesque modern comfort personified. Many lucky people own houses within the confines of the estate and can enjoy winter sports, summer sports, or the sport of doing absolutely nothing, all in a controlled wilderness of forests and river that is truly backwoods-like. The fact that hot water and cocktails go hand in hand with log cabins and rough clothes (designed by Saxe, Fifth Avenue!) only adds charm to Seignior Club vacationing. It is an ideal spot for cooling off in the heat of summer, or heating up in the cool of winter, an all-year playground for the energetic, or a very delightful retreat for the hammock hound with a fan, and the armchair athlete with a book!

All this part of the river road abounds with flower-crowded cottage gardens. Great masses of zinnias and hydrangea and flaunting geraniums burst over fences and even cascade out of barn windows. There was a long barn with five windows full of yellow begonias, and one full

of the most rakish-looking cow with a smirk and a geranium ornamenting one ear. Had Donald Duck arrived at the moment, the scene would have been perfect, because that cow was obviously a retired Hollywood Silly Symphony on holiday!

Lachute came upon us suddenly, but we left it behind and came again to St. Andrews-on-the-Ottawa. Parts of St. Andrews are like an early Victorian colonial illustration—the overhanging trees in the quiet street beside a severely beautiful Georgian stone Kirk; the Manse, so sure in its integrity, its sound workmanship and its air of simple goodness, standing back in a flower garden, where the tall delphiniums and daisies give the final touch to an almost traditional setting. How many Scottish Manses have delphiniums and some white daisies in their gardens? How many Presbyterian divines walk across just such green grass to the Kirk beside the Manse, on just such a warm, grey day, with the mist on the hillside, and the sound of water lapping the shore somewhere in the background?

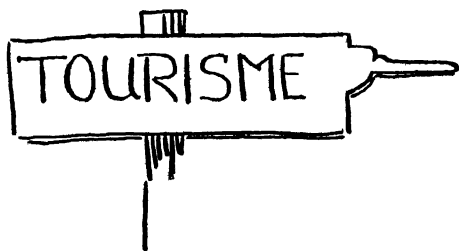
Here in St. Andrews, the Scot is transplanted to the



new soil almost intact, or so it seems in that particular part of the little town. Further back, and along the river road, the old houses are of French design, and the summer estates spread their gorgeous canopies across the hill and down to the river, where white yachts and teak cabin cruisers mirror their elegance in the anchorage beneath the willows. Undoubtedly the touch of Midas is very much in evidence here, even the daisies by the roadway turned from white marguerites to the golden black-eyed-Susans, and the low sports model Rolls-Royce that gurgled along the river road was yellow, and propelled by a gorgeous blonde with a diamond ring that dazzled the passing motorist.

Among all this Midas gold, up pops the flaming head of the fourth generation Canadian Scot, carrotty, triumphant: a girl rides along on her bicycle, weaving in and out among the sports cars, the immaculate flannels and expensive shorts, a very beacon of national continuity in the summer colony crowd. It is interesting, this national unity; a plaid laid down on the banks of the Ottawa one hundred and twenty-five years ago, it has spread to many plaids placed close together forming a tartan patchwork in a long strip of French-Canadian catalan. In this case two races, each famous for keeping unchanged its national characteristics, have lived side by side in comparative harmony for over a century, but to realize fully the utter divergence of lives and ideas, one has only to leave St. Andrews and travel a few miles along the river to Oka, and there is Old France in language, face, religion, and even architecture.

Looking up the big Tourist Guidebook that we have used throughout our wanderings in and about Quebec Province, we failed to find St. Andrews at all. This was extraordinary, as the book, entitled *Along Quebec Highways*, published by the Provincial Tourist Bureau, is a massive tome, full of pictures, maps, and highly specialized information—indeed, so very highly specialized that even the most open-minded traveller must sometimes rebel. Quebec is more Roman Catholic than most parts of continental Europe to-day, and one can well believe the lately expressed view of an eminent observer that Quebec is the great stronghold of Catholicism. However, there is a possibility that the tourists, for whom this guidebook is written, may have no particular views, or alternatively they may have stern Protestant religious sentiments. In either case, I am sure they will feel rather irritated at the regretably partisan information about a



country abounding in historic, economic, and scenic interests. There is so infinitely much more in this charming province than one would ever guess from this rather bleak, semi-ecclesiastical guidebook. For instance, what about a stern Presbyterian conscience encountering this item—under the heading “Saint André”—“The Parish of St. André, whose village, through which the North River

flows, is situated on the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, was founded in 1822 by some Scotsmen and Americans, veterans of the War of Independence. It comprised the first Seigniory of Argenteuil." In the first place, the town was christened, and is always called, St. Andrews-on-the-Ottawa. Named for the patron saint of "some Scotsmen and Americans" (probably of Scots descent) who formed the parish, built their own church and settled the unbroken country on that reach of the Ottawa River. Hurrying to conform to the priestly pattern set by the first paragraphs throughout the book, we next find that, "Its religious offices were performed by the parish priest of Rigand until 1837," and somewhat later, after slight mention of the very important industries, it is admitted that "a Presbyterian Church was built in 1821." That makes it exactly sixteen years before the Catholic congregation was considered large enough for its own priest. But when on "March 17, 1836, the first Roman Catholic Church was blessed by Monsieur Archaubault, parish priest of Vaudreuil," we hear in full the dates and circumstances, followed by another half line, "the Congregational Church was organized in 1838," and on another half line, "the Methodists erected a church in 1845." Then almost with a sigh of unnecessary matters disposed of, back to four lines of priests and "religious communities," winding up with a minimum of real information on the geographic, agricultural and industrial situation.

I greatly deprecate the changing of place names at any time. Unfortunately, it has become common usage to sub-

stitute Three Rivers for the more euphonious *Trois Rivières*, and St. Lawrence, for St. Laurent, but why should a town founded only in 1822 by Scots and Americans, staunch Protestants, christened St. Andrews, and called by the same common usage, St. Andrews-on-the-Ottawa, be termed in this Guide for Tourists "Saint André"?

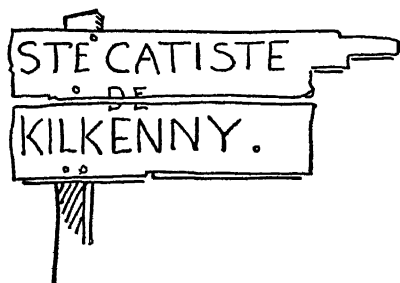
Even good St. Andrew must conform to priestly pattern in Quebec! Himself a man of ample views, a "braw feichter," a man of action, he might well have disliked so circumscribed a role in the calendar of Saints!

And what of the historical background of St. Andrews? Within a few miles of the settlement lies the village of Carillon, the scene of as gloriously heroic a sacrifice as has ever appeared on the pages of history.

The Guidebook tells the story: "It was at the foot of these rapids that Dollard, in the spring of 1760, with sixteen companions and about fifty Hurons and Algonquins, defended for ten days a little picket fort against eight hundred Iroquois. Dollard and all his men perished but the ruinous resistance of that handful of brave men discouraged the Iroquois and saved the colony."

Apart from being exactly one hundred years too late as to the date, the report is substantially correct. Surely the fact that Canada became British in 1759 might have caused the editor of this book to suspect something peculiar about that date? But I am grateful for the delightful name of a tiny village along the road from St. Eustache to Hull, *Cœur-Très-Pur-de-la-Bienheureuse-Verge-Marie-de-Plaisance*. Had it not been for the canonically-minded com-

piler of the Guidebook, one might never have known the full postal address of the 585 people who live there. Nor that Cœur-Très-Pur-de-la-Bienheureuse-Verge-Marie-de-Plaisance was detached from the parishes of Sainte Angélique-de-Papineauville and Saint Jean-d'Évangéliste-de-



Thurso. But when we came across a village called "Sainte Catiste de Kilkenny" we felt that if the saints were becoming catty, as well as the Guidebook, we hadn't a chance!

Apart from all this impedimenta of frivolity, the matter of sensible, informative, non-partizan, and especially non-religious, guidebooks is one that could be examined. The "Tourisme" of the Province of Quebec has been through a shattering political shake-up very recently. One hopes that non-parochial guidebooks and reliable road information may be the outcome of the re-organization. If the Canadian National, the Canada Steamships, Canadian Pacific and the City of Quebec itself can publish excellently got-up folders, with good maps, surely the Provincial Tourisme, putting out a reference book as large and as expensive as the one quoted, can do something more useful to foster the much advertised tourist trade.

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold," and even though I may have fallen somewhat off the gold standard,

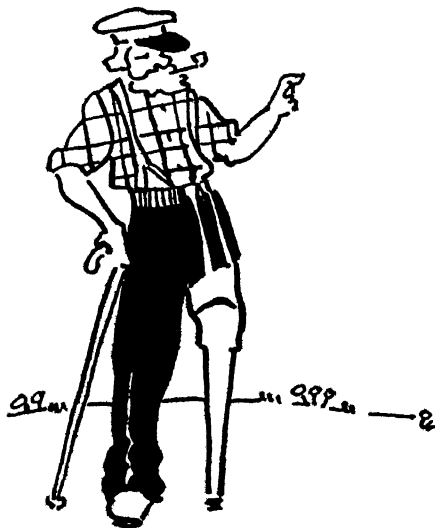


these remarks represent a volume of tourist opinion, and tourist trade, after all, is composed of happy people looking for enjoyment, not religious maniacs looking for trouble!

# CREPE—THE HEROS

BY THIS time Carillon beckoned.

There beside the Long Sault (pronounced "sue" as in Susan) Historical Cairn stood an old man, with the most twinkling eyes in the province, and a wooden leg—a real Shiver-my-Timbers-and-a-Bottle-of-Rum sort of wooden leg. None of these new-fangled jointed affairs that walk quicker than the good leg, *Nom-de-nom*, no!



"This leg, she is good one. Me, no other so good than her," said the Old Man, spitting at the base of the Cairn. "*Mais oui*, M'sieu, me," he informed us proudly, "I am a foreigner."

"A foreigner? But you are French, surely?"

"*Certainement.*"

He paused to fill a black pipe with "*Tabac*" and offered Robin some, which he took. When the business of filling the two pipes was accomplished, and a match shared:

"Perhaps," ventured Robin, "you are from Gaspé?" which was the farthest place he could think of, at the moment.

The Old Man glared "Never!" he cried violently. "That *canaille*!"

We stepped back a pace.

He continued. "The sister of me has went marry on a fisherman of Gaspé. I have, how is it? discontinued her. Bah!" He spat at an ant and missed it.

Evidently a misalliance in the family; we waited to hear more.

"Yes, an' what think you? That man my sister marry on, he send the fish so long," he indicated a yard of fish, "and, look you, M'sieu, he send a rotten fish."

"Perhaps it had been a long time on the way?"

"*Non*, not only one week. And Batiste at the Poste, he has told my wife it is there, and she has went the very next Saturday, and," he paused, adding with horrid emphasis, "that fish she is a smell even then "

Our imaginations ran riot.

"What think you?" demanded our friend.

We daren't tell him.

"That *canaille*, he send the rotten fish for the insult. Not one single bit of that fish is she good, even the tail," he ended regretfully. "And now he is let my sister off with another fisherman. First the rotten fish and now my sister. Bah!"

After a fitting pause, we asked another question.

"Where do you come from, as you say you are a foreigner?"

"Me? I am from Pointe Fortune. There." He pointed across the rapids to a group of buildings among the trees of the farther bank. He drew himself up. "Thirty-six years have I live in Carillon, but my home, my home, it is there."

This "My-Country-'tis-of-thee" manner was too much for me; I left to sketch.

Some time later Robin came to the car. He seemed distraught and appeared to be in the throes of composition. In the fullness of time a limerick emerged—

"There was an Old Man of Carillon  
Who had one leg off and one leg-on."

"How's that?" he asked hopefully.

"Terrible."

After a prolonged silence, he gave voice again.

"There was an old man with twinkling eyes  
Whose wooden leg was a great surprise.  
I inquired, 'Is it sore?'  
He replied, 'Not no more;  
Over there both my leg and my heart lies.' "

"How's that?"

"Terrible."

"The difficulty with you is you're just jealous of my genius."

"Is that what it is? You'd better give it Vitamin B<sub>1</sub>," said I unfeelingly, trying to paint a glimmer of white rapids.

Robin drifted off disconsolately, singing nostalgically an old French-Canadian song—

“If you my land should see,” he waved his hand heroically across the river to the other village—

“My so—oo—unhappy la—and

Say to my friends from me—ee—ee

They in my mem—o—ry sta—and.”

He wiped away a manly tear. The last deep note faded away into infinity—and I hope it stays there. Robin grinned hugely.

Later we arrived at the Old Barracks of the Long Sault. Standing between the road and the rushing white waters of the rapids, its grey stone walls re-echo the sound, and in every nook the music of running water makes a natural obbligato to conversation.

So it must have been in that long ago spring of 1660 when Dollard des Ormoux and his sixteen companions came from Montreal. Guided by a few faithful Algonquins and Hurons, the little party of heroes arrived at the foot of the Long Sault and made camp within a few yards of the present Old Barracks Museum. Here beside the rushing Ottawa was fought out to its certain, foreseen end, one of the most heroic encounters in all history.

In the early days of Ville Marie, as Montreal was then called, the Iroquois were a persistent menace, and many a man went out to his hunting or tilling never to return. The settlement was in a precarious state that spring of 1660, after a shattering winter of privations. In spite of all that Father De Cassons and Sieur Maisonneuve could

do, the settlers were despondent, and when news reached the settlement that the Indians were on the war path and coming up in hundreds from the Iroquois country, around what is now Vermont, Montreal faced the thought of extermination despairingly. It was touch and go whether the settlement should be abandoned altogether. All that fiery oratory and fine example could accomplish seemed to have had no result. Father de Cassons, the great priest and founder of the Sulpicians of Montreal, was in despair. Maisonneuve, the founder of the settlement, saw all his dreams, and the work of a lifetime, going into the smoke pot of the Iroquois burnings and into final oblivion.

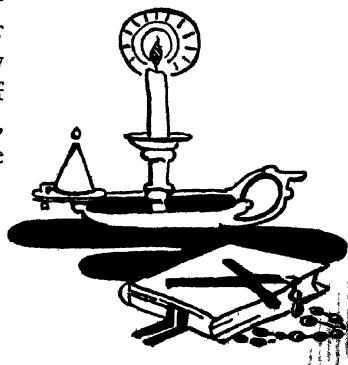
Then came Dollard des Ormoux, the young Seigneur of an island grant, tall, handsome, a man to respect and to follow, with his little band of heroes, fired with their magnificent idea. It was their intention, they said, to go out into the dangerous forests, up the Ottawa River, and there, at the portage of the Long Sault to surprise the oncoming Iroquois hordes on their own ground and hold up the attack on the settlement.

The Governor hesitated, and consulted with the Superior of the Sulpicians; they both knew that the simple-seeming offer was in reality heroic suicide. Without hope of help, or hope of living, certain, though glorious, death was all that could be expected for Dollard's company of heroes. News came that even greater bands of Iroquois were gathering, had been sighted by traders as far up as the Chaudière Falls of the Ottawa River, and pouring down the Richelieu River from the country of the Five

Nations across what is now the International line Every river was alive with painted savages swarming down on the settlement of Ville Marie, the Medicine Men making hideous war incantations and the chiefs inciting their painted warriors to orgies of torture and death among the hated white settlers

Sieur Dollard des Ormoux prepared his followers and laid careful plans He would go up by canoe to the Long Sault Rapids, land and build some sort of small fort with a stockade, if there was time before the savage enemy fell upon them, and thereafter the heroic defenders would be under the protection, and in the hands, of Le Bon Dieu alone

Eventually the Governor consented to the project, and at a never-to-be-forgotten service of dedication in the Chapel of the Nuns of Ville Marie, Father Dollier de Cassons raised trembling hands in blessing and absolved sixteen gallant gentlemen Looking down on the bowed heads, golden blond, brown and blue-black, the good priest could only pray that death would be clean and mercifully quick, unlike the tortured passing of the Jesuit Fathers, Lalemant and de Bréboeuf, that had so recently shocked the settlements Then, their peace made with God and man, uplifted but resolute, bidding inevitable, final farewell to their families, Dollard's men pushed silently off into the dark night, the soft drip of flying paddles dying away in the distance, as the weeping women turned from the



River that was carrying their men to a certain rendezvous with death.

Dollard and his followers made good time and found that it was still possible to get to the Long Sault, for no sign of the swarming invading Iroquois disturbed their voyage. Spring was showing the first signs of renaissance, birds sang, and the maple buds were bursting beacons of crimson as the travellers landed at the foot of the rapids. Life must have been very sweet to those young men in the spring of that far-away year, but they were men apart, dedicated to heroic death, and the elation of the great martyrs must have sustained them. Getting to work at once, they felled trees and built a blockhouse. Even then there was no sign of the raiders, and apparently the Indians did not get news of the white men in their path. Naturally, the Chiefs did not imagine any man, even a paleface, could be so gloriously foolhardy as to venture outside the palisade of his settlement, and the idea of anyone actually coming into the very path of the raiders never occurred to the wily Indians. This was exactly what Dollard had counted upon, and by the time the Iroquois appeared, the defenders had a thin stockade built around the solid blockhouse, and were in a position to give battle to the hundreds of painted warriors that surrounded them.

Day after day the savages attacked; night after night the watchers fought off the infuriated red men. Great torches of flaming rosin were thrown into the enclosure and under cover of darkness bonfires were lighted against the wooden stockade, but always the spitting carbines of



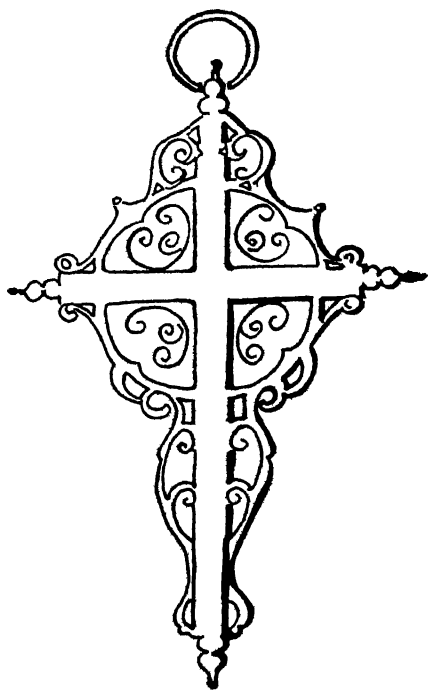
the defenders took such toll of the Iroquois that the attackers withdrew, leaving hundreds of their bravest warriors dead about the frail fort. Back came another wave of red-men, to break and withdraw again. In a frenzy of balked fury, more and still more, out of the hostile, surrounding forests, came the Indians, attacking, withdrawing temporarily, attacking again, day and night, day and night. Breaches appeared in the defences; some of the torches had burned the stockade, and the flimsy, temporary repairs were crumbling, and still the red waves pounded the fort. Water and provisions were getting scarce, but so were the defenders. Many of that brave company were safe from the Iroquois vengeance for ever, but Dollard was still alive to cheer his haggard, devoted followers. Every blow was one more delay, and every shot one less Indian to attack the settlement and, though they did not know it, every untold deed of that epic fight was a stone in the foundations of Canada.

For ten heroic days Dollard, his sixteen country-men, and some fifty loyal Huron and Algonquin allies fought off the swarming Iroquois. Ten days of sleeplessness, alarms and constant danger; ten days of sudden death, of thirst, and of pain, and over all, the terror of falling alive into the hands of thwarted savages. But, fighting without hope of life, fighting for a practical ideal, and for their loved ones in a settlement they would never see again, these simple heroes defended their outpost to the last man, and on the tenth day, when the yelling, bloodthirsty savages at last swarmed into the blockhouse, nothing

awaited their revenge but the lifeless bodies of great-souled men.

Amazed and stunned at the resistance of a handful of whites, the Iroquois gave up their intention of exterminating the settlement of Montreal and returned to their own country. The Indian losses had been tremendous, and the Chiefs decided that if a handful of white men in

a small wooden fort could inflict such destruction on the warriors, it was impossible to say what would happen if a whole settlement were attacked and fought back. Never again were the Indians of the Five Nations assembled in such force, and it can truly be said that the fight at the Long Sault saved not only Ville Marie but all the settlements on the River, possibly even Quebec itself, from the revengeful, fighting Iroquois invaders.

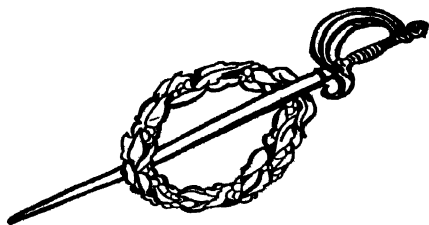


The only news, and the only description, of this epic of pioneer days, was given to the settlers of Ville Marie

by two Indians who had deserted in terror from Dollard's garrison. Thinking to be well treated by turning informer, one of these men, a half-caste, escaped to the Iroquois, who treated him with suspicion and as a slave, but did not torture him, as was usual with most of their Huron enemies. He acted as interpreter to the actions from Dollard's fort, and after the final scene was played, the Iroquois let the traitor escape, to take the news to the settlements. The other Indian told the same tale, before they both disappeared into the forests and were seen no more.

So ended the triumphant episode of the Long Sault but the tale is an unquenchable torch illuminating the early pages of Canadian history.

Beside the road through the village of Carillon stands a monument, its back to the creaming rapids, whereon are engraved the names of the heroes of the Long Sault, and many of those proud names are familiar in French Canada today.



## PATCH 6

### MONKSCLOTH—THE TRAPPIST MONKS OF OKA

SAY "Oka" to most Canadians, and the reaction is "Cheese", but there is a lot more to it than that.

The Trappist Monks of Oka are famous, not only as cheesemakers, but as agriculturists, botanists and livestock experts. Less than sixty-five years ago the Sulpician Order gave a tract of virgin land not far from Montreal on a lake shore to the monks who came out from the Abbey of Belle-Fontaine, in France. To-day, the huge Agricultural College overlooks a fertile valley stretching down to the Lake of Two Mountains, and back into the rolling green hills. These pioneer monks cleared, ploughed, sowed, and in season, reaped the first harvests at La Trappe. They built the first Monastery on the hill-top, planting the alien Lombardy poplars that now look so much a part of the Canadian landscape. And the first cheese was safely laid away in the cold cellars, the foundation stone of fame to come.

The Monastery itself is a fine building, or so it seemed to me from a goodish distance, my sex being against a nearer inspection. Brown-, black-, and white-habited monks moving about the grounds formed an almost medieval foreground to the modern buildings. In the fields, among the thriving crops, novices in large straw hats, incongruous above white monastic habits, worked silently in the hot sun. Silence is the rule of this Order, and it is

curious to register the sound of a grating tractor, the sizzling burr of a Wee Macgregor saw, even the soft buzzing bees, but no whistling, no shouts, no sound of human voices in the still summer air.

We chugged up the hill towards the Monastery. A brown-frocked, bearded monk worked in a ditch with a swarthy labourer. Both rested on their shovels to watch our trailer pass, the monk with eyes firmly glued to his gum boots until the female of the species was safely past, then up bobbed a bearded chin, and a pair of deepset eyes took in the whole outfit. I saw it all in the rear view mirror. It must be strange to be a silent, down-glancing Trappist monk of Oka.

Wherever the Order goes, agriculture goes with it. The monks are of tremendous importance in community life, for their experiments with both stock and crop raising have helped farming in the district, and the Agricultural College has produced better farmers, not only in French Canada, but over the whole Dominion. Certainly the beautiful, fertile acres, swelling in abundance, about the Abbey of Our Lady of Two Mountains is proof of the faith and the industry of the monks of La Trappe.

We were told that it was possible to get a meal at the Agricultural College for which one paid by contributing something to the Monastery funds. I have never lunched with a Trappist, and am inclined to try anything once, but due to the size and excellence of "the eggs of Gran'mère" at breakfast, only an hour behind us, lunch was an impossible thought.

Being a "she", I cannot, of course, tell of a personal reaction to the interior of the Monastery, but Robin says that the long, white corridors, austere to a degree, leave the visitor (male) totally unprepared for the brilliant colouring and elaborate decoration of the Chapel. It has developed an amazingly antique appearance, in spite of the fact that it is only some twenty years ago that the original Chapel burned down and the present was built.

The daily routine of the monks is simple and austere; very little meat is eaten, and sleep is at a minimum. Devotions, fasts and meditation come round at the appointed seasons, while work and prayer go hand in hand down the long white corridors of La Trappe.

The barns, the fields, the flower borders, are a marvel of efficiency, and modern ideas in everything agricultural reflect the up-to-date minds at work. Livestock of all sorts, from pure-bred cows to honey bees, have a place at La Trappe. One monk is a famous authority on peonies, while another specializes in stock, and one and all are workers. Then there is the powerful cheese, and Oka cheese is famous. We had heard of, seen and smelt it; Robin has even tasted it. We had been told somewhere that the monks matured the cheese under manure heaps. We thought this too medieval to be true, but formed ourselves into a committee of Inquiry into the Manurial Rites of Oka, and discovered, alas, that no manure enters into the making. No, on the contrary, everything connected with the cheese-making is unromantically and hygienically scientific. In fact, nothing about the monks of Oka is,

medieval save their monkish habits, both personal and sartorial.

\*

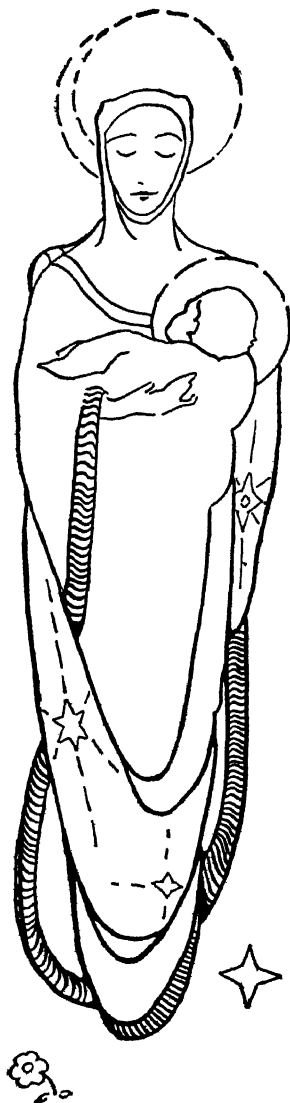
\*

\*

The Lake of Two Mountains has legends aplenty about its serrated shores.

High above the water, on a wooded hillside, stands a little chapel and oratory. Built a long time ago for the early converts among the Indians, it remains the same to-day as when the first missionary Father said the first Mass in the miraculous new "*Chapelle*". Everyone knew without a doubt that this place upon the hillside was indeed a chosen spot, for had not the Blessed Virgin Herself caused water to be where no water was? Was it not a veritable fact that the labouring workmen, weary and thirsty with the toil of hauling stones up the steep track, had searched every yard of that hill-top for a spring of clear water and found no smallest drop? And had not the good priest prayed and exhorted the workmen and Indians to pray, asking that a fount of water be provided for the refreshment of all the workers on the oratory? Moreover, see what happened. A sparkling stream of ice-cold water had come at the bidding of the Blessed Sainte Virge, and flowed forever.

After this miracle, the Chapel of the Calvary was doubly sacred to the converted Indians and the *habitant* population of Lake of Two Mountains. From 1733, when it was built, the little Shrine has remained quite unchanged, and now, from the miraculous hill-top can be



seen the clustered houses, patchwork farm lands, and the ever increasing buildings of the monks of Oka.

Further away the lake spreads a shimmering silver cloth decorated with green islands. It was on one of these islands that Manitou, great God of the Indian, descended to earth. Once in the dim, pine-scented past, when the red man was young and free, the Manitou, disguised in the black plumage of the Thunder Bird, flew low across the Lake and landed on the island. Great lightnings flecked the waters, and great rains came, and all the Indians fell on their faces, worshipping in fear. Later, thinking the Manitou would be hungry, the Chief and the bravest warriors went in canoes laden with food to the island. The Manitou was gone, but as a proof of his having been there, the Chief returned with a cloak of jet black



feathers, and told of a thunderbolt buried in the island rock.

\*

\*

\*

Trundling along the winding roads between Oka and Montreal, we rejoiced in the little villages, the brightly painted houses surrounded by flowers. Masses of phlox and zinnia, tubs of pink and white hydrangea sprouting from every available ledge and doorstep, and along the wayside, yellow canaries perching among blue speedwell, filled the countryside with song

Coming to a village of one very narrow street, we were forced suddenly to swerve to the side, as a taxi full of priests pushed us into a cottage wall. The trailer nearly scraped the shutters off that cottage, but the ecclesiastical taxi swept on, oblivious of ordinary courtesy. After this, feeling out of tune with the canaries and bright gardens, driving morosely along, muttering in our whiskers, we were only restored to the simple pleasures of life when we met a Looking-Glass House. It was terrific! The whole front is made of bits of coloured looking-glass let into stucco, which scintillate in the sunlight, almost blinding the unnerved beholder. We forgot all about the rudeness of the heaven-appointed taxicab, and went laughing on our way.

In these parts they use bird-cage bridges. At least, that is what they look like. A cable is strung across the Back River, which here flows between the north shore and the group of islands about Montreal. Along the wire travels

a little cage with seats, no roof, no nothing much, all very fragile-looking, but presumably quite efficient, for we saw a fat old farm woman getting into one quite unconcernedly.

About this time a "cloud as big as a tar barrel" appeared, accompanied by lightning and loud thunder.

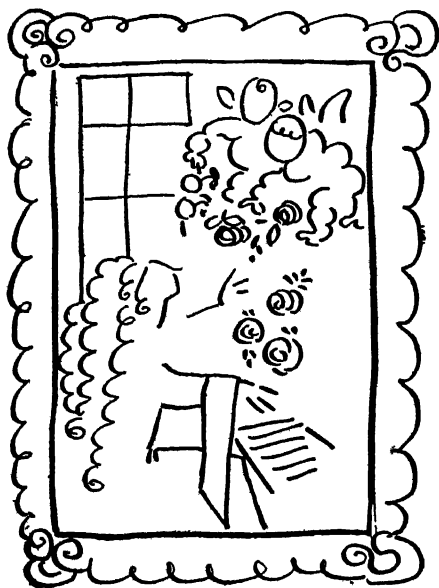


We remembered that the Manitou came in just such a storm, and promptly looked about for a "Bier et Vin", (hereinafter known collectively as "Beeryvans"). Drink and shelter were imminently desirable.

Was there a Beeryvan to be seen? No! A lonely stretch of flat road lay ahead, and on that open road the cloud-burst hit us. We had rushed out to clamp down the trailer's sky ventilator, but the car roof leaked and the floor flooded from numerous, all too obvious sources. The noise outside was terrific; great bursts of thunder crashed right overhead, and forked lightning seemed to be dancing everywhere, making a glittering electric curtain of the torrential rain.

Had one not been a modern, one would have been terrified. I was terrified anyway! Suddenly the rain shut off like a tap, and there, not twelve yards away, stood a huge brewer's truck, loaded to the gunwales with barrels of beer. More than ever in need of stimulants, we continued our search for a Beeryvan, and finally drew up at a little

"Hotel" in a village street. There, in a shiningly clean parlour, we had sandwiches and beer, and saw the first brightly green, yellowy varnished lithograph of St. Cecilia. St. Cecilia is playing an organ with one hand and taking



some pink and red cabbage roses from two cheerfully over-stuffed cherubs with the other, the whole in a frame conceived by a gold-leaf worker with D.T's. As well as St. Cecilia there were two serious-minded young men in the room, eating in a serious-minded way. We sat down at our window table and, looking out, saw the brown leather-covered trailer crawling

with flies. We remarked cheerfully that the flies obviously took the trailer for a cow, and the young men left, giving us a sternly pitying look as they reached the door in safety!

It was here that Dogdog went out for a walk, and was talking to a nice, exuberant collie pup when its owner came out, kicked it firmly in the jaw, spat over Dogdog's

ear, and returned within. The peasantry have such pretty ideas about animals! Dogdog said he didn't so much object to the kick on the pup's jaw, but he did think spitting so close to any pure-bred Sealyham was practically unforgivable!

After leaving the village, the choke-cherry sellers became epidemic. Every hundred yards, youngsters, ages six to sixteen, danced about the road holding out bags of strange little black fruits. The children all yelled at the top of their voices, and we yelled back, and all together it was a delightful din. One small infant had a very rakish sailor hat with a ribbon round it saying simply "*Matelot*" in case anyone thought he was a soldier!

In the village of St. Eustache we stopped to look at the shell dents in the Church walls. It was here that the abortive Papineau rebellion ended in disaster and death for a number of brave but misguided patriots, in the troublous times of Upper Canadian politics and policies.

There were a lot of foreign cars about on the roads; for every local car at least six United States visitors were seen; east, south and as far west as California and Wyoming. French Canada is more than hospitable to the American visitor, in spite of the children at St. Bénédicite, who, seeing us arrive at the end of the village street, smiled largely and shouted "Good-bye, good-bye," although it was obviously not a case of "Here's your hat and what's your hurry?"

Dreaming along the by-roads, seeing the simplicity of life so near and yet so utterly remote from the great



city, we got lost. The frequency with which this occurs in the patchwork of this book is more due to the spirit of don't care a damn, than to poor organization. Any side road, alley, cul-de-sac or obviously unused track charms us from the straight and level red line of certified roads, and there we are, lost again!

It was in the hinterlands hereabouts that the old *habitant* sat making axe handles. The sun beat on the high stone wall, but the Old Axe handle-maker sat in the shade, under an overhanging elm tree. He whittled and he chipped, and every now and then sharpened a hunting knife on a round stone. The flying golden chips glinted in the sunlight as they fell, and the Old Man spat contentedly among the residue of a thousand axe handles. And through the gateway a glimpse of a village street, almost a fairy-tale illustration, something beginning "Once upon a time an Old Man sat whittling"; I have made an illustration for a souvenir of that heart-lifting moment. Not often does a ready-made picture come unaltered into a sketch book.

Montreal was really the place we were supposed to be, and in the fullness of time we arrived there.

## PATCH 7

### BROADCLOTH—MONTREAL

**M**ONTREAL is a wonderful city, modern, well planned, its unrivalled mountain park soaring up from the massed buildings. It seems a symbol of Canada's great open spaces. Even in the largest city in the Dominion, the fourth largest French city in the world, there is room for a whole maple-covered mountain to remain untouched, a winter paradise and a summer solace to Montreal's people. Truly a "Royal Mountain" as Cartier called it.

That's just the point. One forgets, with one eye on the dress shops and the other on the traffic cop, that Montreal has any historical background.

And yet—. In the thin dusk of a May evening in 1642 four small ships anchored off the shore. Splashing through the shallows to the beach, not far from the vast C.P.R. piers of to-day, came a splendid figure of a man, Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve, the founder of the colony-to-be. Following him came a little band of men and women, gazing half fearfully through the shadows into an unknown future. The landing speech of the Jesuit priest that day was prophetic in the extreme, though no man of that age could possibly foresee the immensities of the far future of Ville Marie (Montreal). He said, looking over the forty-three settlers standing on the River bank, "You

are as a grain of mustard-seed that shall rise, and grow, till its branches overshadow the earth."

To-day Montreal has well over a million population; so if you are a gardener, beware of mustard seed!

That inquiring man, Jacques Cartier, had been upon the island in 1539 when he discovered the village of Hochelaga, but seventy-two years later when Champlain came the Indians and the village had totally disappeared. Apparently this Indian encampment stood in a corner of what is now McGill University Campus. On the Sherbrooke

Street side, where the McCord Museum is built, is the ground upon which the first white man was entertained with a supper dance and floor show, in the Indian manner.

McGill, perhaps the best known English-speaking Canadian University, occupies park-like grounds, with the roofs of the Royal Victoria Hospital

seen behind, under the very brow of Mount Royal. Immediately above on the hill-top stands a huge cross, gaunt

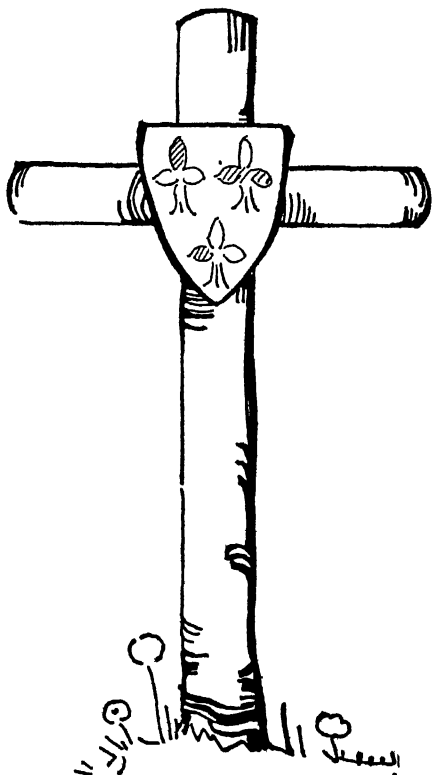




by day, illuminated by night, standing where Maisonneuve planted his huge wooden votive cross in 1643.

In that first winter, on Christmas day, the infant colony was almost flooded out, and Maisonneuve swore if the place was saved, he would carry a wooden cross to the top of Mount Royal. The floods abated, and in the following January, the Head of the Colony carried out his vow, placing the cross on the high spot overlooking the whole wild countryside.

There is, in the Church of Notre Dame, Place d'Armes, a very fine stained glass window picturing the story; one window, and one incident, of the many historical glasses in the Church. It was in the Place d'Armes that the mighty Maisonneuve, marching dangerously through the dense forest with one or two companions, was attacked by Indian warriors, and slew their lead-



er single-handed. The other Indians were so surprised at the daring of the paleface that they disappeared in a hurry, and Maisonneuve arrived safely at the settlement. To-day his figure, done in bronze, still guards the square and the approach to the great Church of Notre Dame de Montreal.

The whole of the interior of this vast building is beautiful. Gothic in feeling, tall, graceful, somehow rather austere in spite of the infinite richness of intricate wood-carving. The light, filtering through stained glass windows, falls in jewelled patterns, dimmed with a thousand shadows. Blue incense haze blurs the outlines of numerous Saints, the little votive candles glimmering before the Shrines and Chapels surrounding the vast central nave. A black-robed nun moves quietly about the high altar, with fresh flowers in her hands, and a Personally Conducted Tour tramps stridently in, around, and out, leaving the great church echoing to its unlovely tread.

One little thing gave me great pleasure. In the stained-glass history of Montreal, in Notre Dame, a series of windows depict the women pioneers, Jeanne Mance, Marguerite Bourgeoys, Madame de la Peltrie, and others. It has always been a hobby-horse with me, this matter of the pioneer women of Canada. Apart from a few early Frenchwomen, the nuns, the teachers, an outstanding heroine or two, there is an historical hiatus that infuriates me. All one finds in the books is something like this: "John Blank was a truly great and remarkable man, a man of tremendous physical strength and endurance, just, courageous, steadfast through all privations, strong in the face of over-

whelming dangers, undeterred by war-like Indians and savage beasts alike, he blazed a glorious trail in the new world." Then, in very small letters; "With him went his wife, and they had thirteen children." Well!

Getting regretfully off this hobby-horse, I return to the Place d'Armes, where the twin towers of Notre Dame cast lengthening shadows across the serried ranks of taxis and where, full flood, the office workers pour out from tall buildings as far as the eye can see. A flock of pigeons rises into the air, flying swiftly over the high grilled gate of the Seminary into the shadowed courtyard of the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice. A pale plume of spring green foliage rises up from the trees in the corner, and from the River a deep-voiced ocean liner bellows a sea-going adieu to the Port of Montreal on a May evening.

In one of these towers hangs the famous bell, "*le Gros-bourdon*", weighing twenty-four thousand, seven hundred and fifty pounds, the largest bell in America. The building itself is the second largest Church on the continent, and is a copy of Notre Dame in Paris. A glance at the list of places of worship in the city gives a neat cross-sectional view of Montreal to-day:

- 105 Roman Catholic
- 38 Synagogues
- 37 Anglican
- 34 United Church of Canada
- 21 Presbyterian
- 10 Baptist
- 2 Christian Science
- 1 Unitarian

By their Churches shall ye know them!

The old Seminary of the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice is a whitewashed stone house, with its square clock in a little tower on top of a square-fronted façade, all of which has undeniable charm. This is where the Seigneurs of the Island of Montreal established themselves in 1685, and it was from this house that the first established priests of Ville Marie (Montreal) started their parochial rounds. Later, as the Gentlemen spread their teaching both to the French and Indian youths, they built the Fort des Messieurs up near the Mountain, of which the round towers remain.

Wandering about the Place d'Armes square, we found in another corner the place where the Dillon Tavern stood. It was the local high spot in the days of the Beaver Club's famous banquets. These Beavers were very industrious, their damns were renowned, but they were not particularly interested in water, judging by the list of drinks from one of their banquets:

40 bottles Madeira

12 bottles Port

14 bottles porter

8 bottles beer (somebody let the side down!)

6 pints cider (probably for the servants)

and

8 nightcaps brandy and wine with honey

by which item we gather there were eight Beavers present on this Christmas Eve of 1808. It goes to prove that these wealthy fur traders were as courageous with the bottle as they were with a canoe. We wondered what the local

"Sweet Adeline" of the period was; possibly "Allouette"—

*"Allouette, gentil Allouette*

*Allouette, je te plumerai—"*

The words were simple for the occasion, and they echoed across the Place d'Armes then, as the taxi horns do now.

Farewell Romance and the 40-Bottle Men!

The porticoed columns of the Bank of Montreal, one of the world's greatest financial institutions, look "down from the north" (I hate to mention the rest of the quotation—but) "Like a wolf on the fold"! That is always the impression the Bank of Montreal gives me! Except, of course, in London or Paris, when it is one's dearly loved old friend, a meeting-place, a very home from home! It is only when you get back and your local branch hands out an unobtrusive debit slip that the financial were-wolfishness appears again!

And there to-day in Place d'Armes stands the statue of Maisonneuve unfurling the flag of France for all time. Before that gallant bronze figure, one May 18th, a gorgeous cavalcade paused momentarily, in gracious tribute to the founder of the Dominion's largest city, exactly to the day, two hundred and ninety-seven years after Maisonneuve's company arrived, the King and Queen of England came across the Place d'Armes, amid the tumultuous cheering of delighted Quebecers seeing for the first time in history their King in person. Awed with the tremendous import of that fact, the crowds were at first silent. The Queen smiled, and an enthralled people burst into such thunderous approval that the frightened pigeons flew

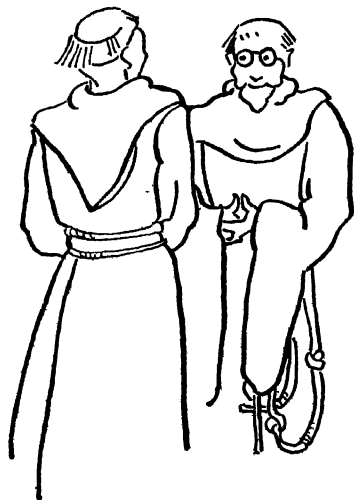
circling into the blue sky, and "*le Grosbourdon*" echoed the deep-throated roar in all his twenty-four thousand, seven hundred and fifty pounds.

\* \* \*

Walking seems the best idea in this part of the fifty square miles of Montreal. All about is historic ground, and a sudden epidemic of commemorative plaques breaks out. We seriously upset the lunch-time pedestrian traffic one day by leaping across the pavements, doubling back and forth, or standing stock still to read these patches of history. The first Jewish Synagogue, for instance; the first Anglican Cathedral; the house of Duluth, the great explorer who founded the city of that name across the International Border, the Convent of the Grey Nuns of the Congregation, and the little Chapel of Notre Dame de Victoire which was built as a thank-offering when the British Fleet was destroyed in 1711 on its way to capture

Quebec and Montreal. All vanished in the toils of time.

Somehow we had got into St. James Street, the financial part of the town, and were duly impressed by the magnificence of the company signs on the mausoleum-like doors. St. James is a one-way street.



Certainly anything I ever had to do with a financial thoroughfare was one way—down. But this road seems to be on the level, though that may be some sort of optical delusion!

Soon we turn towards the river again and come into Bonsecours Market. It is a Friday, and all the surplus produce from the big market buildings overflows, pushing up the hill towards the Nelson column. Flowers, fruit—remember this is the harvest month—golden, scarlet, brilliant green, tomatoes, pumpkins, apples, pears, gourds, and wart-encrusted squash. Zinnias in bath tubs, cheese in captivity, chickens in the nude



“Heigh ho, come to the fair.”

The smell of fried fish, shouts and laughter from crammed lunch counters on the sidewalks, the first crop of “*Tabac Canadien*”, the last crop of late peaches.

The Nelson column looks imposing at the top of the hill, even with its feet set skittishly in banks of brilliant flowers. I like the idea of Nelson and Vauquelin standing staring stonily at each other in a “haven’t been introduced” manner French and British Admirals of strictly rival fleets, doomed to look at each other until the cement cracks. A “quaint conceit”

We always say, a statue is a dangerous thing to happen to one. How would you like to see yourself sculpted in

palm leaves or laurels, looking noble and unamused for perpetuity? Lots of trees planted and growing with the years, seem a more constructive memorial. Of course, about Nelson and Vauquelin, I expect Nelson is looking out of his blind eye!

The weather was superb, not too hot, and day after day of brilliant sunshine, that made poking about among the streets of the Old Town a pleasure, instead of a mere educational exercise.

Deciding, in a rush of bravado, to go to the Chateau de Ramazay by street car, I got lost. Not knowing Montreal well, various things happened to me. First, the car I was on turned out to be going to Westmount, so I got out and boarded another. We proceeded east in fine style, back to Peel, on to Simpson's, Eaton's, but at Morgan's we suddenly shot off somewhere and arrived in the land of Babel—Yiddish, Italian, French, German, and something I can only believe to be Russian in its natural state, being talked all together. I got out again and fell over an uneven paving stone. Hat over one eye, and pride in the dust, I picked myself up (no dashing, foreign gallant seemed to want to, and I couldn't stay there all day!), and asked the way. They all said, "Get off at St. Denis and change into such and such a car." I got on one, handed the driver my now fly-blown transfer. Wrong car, but the driver said he'd give me a ride for two blocks. Having ricked an ankle in falling, and feeling queer in the head, I got out again, in again, a rattling progress, and out near a short hill; up that, and finally, limping into the

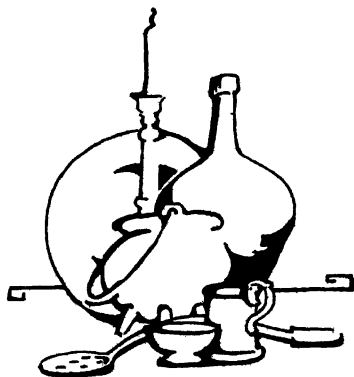


Chateau de Ramazay, I paid my admittance money, took one good look at a severe cardinal in a gold frame, and fainted on the floor

Slogan—take a taxi, if you want to find the Chateau de Ramazay

The next time I went to the old Chateau, the kindly woman in the office eyed me with grave foreboding, but I remained definitely perpendicular

The men who built for Governor Claude de Ramazay that summer of 1705 were good artisans, for the foundations are well and truly laid. The vaults and kitchens retain the atmosphere of the spacious days of domestic living, when a servant's life was a continual marathon between colossal kitchen and enormous upper rooms. It may have been the dappled sunlight slanting down through deep vaulted windows onto old brickwork, or the ineffable smell of underground stone that was intriguing, but I liked it down there. Sabots and bicycles, and the first automobile in Montreal, bee-skeps, old lanterns and "choppers to chop off your head" and bits of a ship that sank when it was launched. So many contemporary domestic things are there too; cradles, fire irons, churns, wash boards, rum jars, wine bottles, warming pans, iron cooking pots and copper preserving kettles, that bring back the humble domestic ghosts in their homespun with white aprons and caps catching the



ruddy glow from the huge open fire. The oven in the thickness of the chimney wall beside the fireplace is the central point of interest. It seems a very good idea, except how did you ever get near enough to open the door if a huge log fire burned in the equally huge fireplace? Did a par-boiled cook scrabble around the edge of a spluttering whole pig on the turn spit? Or didn't she bake and roast at the same time? Or did she just burn up? A very difficult domestic thought. But, of course, labour was cheap in those days, and a cook more or less didn't matter much! Still, judging by the goodly girth displayed by some of the men in the portrait gallery, I would think that a good cook was a treasured possession to them, not to be lightly, or thoughtlessly, cremated.

The portraits are most interesting, picturing the great names that are the signposts of our history. The clever face of Laval, Marguerite Bourgeoys in her near-religious habit, Samuel de Champlain, the man who dreamed Canada, I don't like the face of that man with the narrow-minded mouth. Brébœuf and Lalemant, dreamers, fanatics, but with what a magnificent fanaticism; Governors in silks and velvets. It is difficult to remember that all these pictured faces were once real people, whose

“—hearts were woven of human joys and cares,  
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.”

History was made by human people, with minds great or small, who talked of the price of candles and what happened in France, or England, or Trois Rivières. The flag changes, the King changes, but the talk of candle grease

and Three Rivers goes on much the same. Birth, marriage and death take their accustomed personal perspective in the lives of their principals. The loom of history clanks, and soon all these individualized people are only part of a pattern in the great backdrop on the stage of Canada To-day.

Here is a small domestic thread in the pioneer fabric—an apothecary jar that Jeanne Mance brought with her from France. What was in it? Some special salve for knife wounds, perhaps, or powdered herbs for brewing potions “very good for ye bodie humoures”, or it may have been used for mixing a headache cure, “For headache take ye jar full of leaves of ye green rue, and an spoonful of mustardseed, rub together, add ye white of ye egg, an spoonful, that the salve may be thick. Smear with an feather on ye side that aches not.” I wonder how many people died of “An surfeit” in those early days, that really had an appendix? And what did the colony do about vitamins? I am sure they worried more about Iroquois than calories, but every age has its worries!

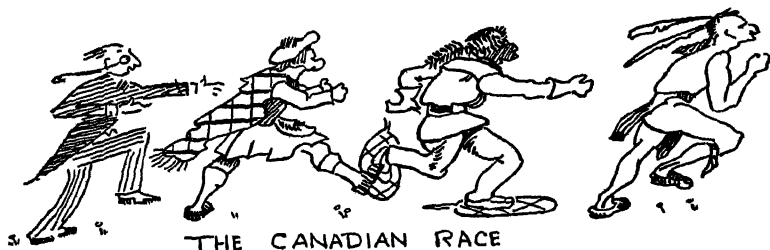
The beautifully proportioned salon, with its long, deep windows, retains an air of elegance, enhanced by the origin-



al delicate plaster work and the carved chimney piece of contemporary design. One can picture the old Chateau as it was that last autumn day before Montreal surrendered to the British—the French soldiers encamped above the slope, Governor Vaudreuil, in retreat from fallen Quebec, sheltering there; Intendant Bigot intriguing and still looking for pickings among the ruins of the colony. And on Ile St. Hélène de Levis, the patriot soldier burning the silken standards with their battle scars and golden fleur-de-lys, watching, weary and heart-sick, over the dying lilies of France.

Later, the Chateau housed the victorious Americans and in the big salon sat Montgomery, planning the fatal attack on Quebec. Here came Benjamin Franklin, as an envoy from Congress, to stir up the French Canadians to revolt against the British. He published a newspaper, *The Gazette*, to help along the project, but the power of the press failed that time, and the *habitants* remained loyal.

In the Chateau to-day the sunlight pours in the long windows, as it did then, but the gallant ghosts of bygone days step lightly, and rather faintly, among the pointing arrows, labels, and glass cases.



## PATCH 8

### VELVETEEN—TROIS RIVIERES

WE ARRIVED in Trois Rivières in the early evening—a rain-washed, mother-of-pearl evening—and began a hunt for a likely-looking trailer camp. All the way, for miles, notices had informed the traveller that the Chateau de Blois was so many miles, and finally, when well into the outskirts of the town, a large notice saying simply “Chateau de Blois” adjacent to an aged-looking martello tower, caused us to turn sharply off the road and trundle down to the place. The aged tower

turned out to be a coal depot beside railway lines, all very non-historical and of the industrial period, and most definitely not Chateau de Blois. We still had no idea what it might be, ancient or modern, hotel, museum or camp, but we gathered it was an hotel of some sort, and one’s curiosity was aroused by so many far-flung notices. Soon we trundled into the business



centre of the town and finding, as usual, that there was no ice, butter, eggs (I don't know why, but eggs, or the lack of them, seemed to haunt us from the very beginning) or milk, we parked on a fine, broad road down the hill from the famous Flambeau. While a curious crowd collected to have a close-up of the trailer, Robin went to the Tourist

Bureau, and I went eggwards. Later, being too shy to push through the crowd around our portable home, we sneaked up the hill and had a look at the Flambeau. It is an impressive monument, a tall, solid granite pylon, with a lighted torch on top, to the memories of all the pioneer explorers, missionaries, *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois* that the little settlement of Trois Rivières has sent out through the three centuries of its colourful existence. Perhaps no one settlement produced so many distinguished pioneer Frenchmen as the trading settlement at the mouth of the St. Maurice River.

It was in the far-off year of 1598 that the noted Frenchman, Pont Grave, wrote that he had been there a few times to trade with the Indians. After that the post grew gradually and became well known to the traders and *voyageurs* upon the St. Maurice and St. Lawrence Rivers. It was not until thirty-five years after Pont Grave that the permanent settlement was established and the trading post became the flourishing pioneer outpost town. All through its history, Trois Rivières has kept its romantic connection with the early trading and to-day is one of the busiest River ports. A large percentage of its inhabitants work in the many industries and the modern business section is a typical modern town; but always there is the intangible background of adventurous quest, the atmosphere of the great explorers and the dreamers of far-flung dreams, whose vision sent them out into the savage wildernesses, and whose indomitable courage planted the golden lilies of France upon the Rockies.

The Flambeau is a fine conception, impressive in its simplicity and strength, and the ever-burning torch is a true symbol of the unforgetting centuries-old memory of the Quebec *habitant*.

Another characteristic seems to be curiosity! The crowd around the trailer was still two deep, but we had to be on our way, so, grasping the tourist information and the eggs, we pushed a way through, got into the car and drove off, to the obvious vocal sorrow of two small boys, who had hopes of getting inside the "*petite maison-la*". Their disappointed, grubby faces, boot-button eyes glaring disappointment, haunted us all the way to the cliff camp, where we eventually anchored for the night.

Below, on a small edge of sand, Dogdog had a fine scamper and the luck to find a most decrepit bone. When it was taken away from him, he ran up the cliff path and got under the trailer and sulked. Only the sound of supper being prepared induced him to come out of his haughty isolation. We took out the little stove again and cooked in the open air on the cliff edge, the blue smoke of our filet mignon blowing downstream after an out-bound passenger ship. Opposite, a dredger dropped her shovel into the water with a loud splash, gouged out a bit of river bottom, heaved it up and dumped the lot, with a sloshing flop, into the huge mud bath of her hold—and then did it all over again. The splash-gouge-splosh rhythm of a mud dredger is almost the sloppiest sound I have ever heard!

The last drop of coffee finished, and the lights twin-



klings now on the river boats, we cleared up and sat smoking by the old apple tree. It was a gnarled, ancient tree with a harvest of little green apples the size of marbles. Had someone brought it out from France and planted it on the new farm? Hardly likely, opined Rob-

in, since apple trees rot in time, unlike the cedars and firs or even the hardwoods. Elms develop core rot without giving any outward sign—we wondered about the elms on the terrace in the old part of Trois Rivières.

In a house by the elms la Vérendrye was born; behind that was built the Ursuline Convent, and there it stands strong and sturdy to-day, its square wall sundial telling the hours as it has done since the first Sisters came down from the Mother House in Quebec in the year 1697. Housed inside the whitewashed stone of the Ursuline wall is the only real museum in Trois Rivières, and it takes a month of Saint's Days to get in! Even the magic of an introductory card to one of the senior Sisters from our old friend, Doctor Rousseau, failed to open those historic doors to me. I was bitterly disappointed, and the sweet-



faced little Sister to whom I talked, taking pity, explained more fully.

"The museum is of the Convent only, Madame, *vous comprenez?* And it is of very much value and interest." The little Sister paused proudly.

"That, ma Sœur, is why I am so very disappointed. It is full of the most precious things, I have heard."

"Truly have you heard, Madame. Our Community keeps always the treasures *historique*, the books, the records, for all the three hundred years of our Order being here."

"Would it be possible for me to see, perhaps, some, even a few of your historic treasures and the beautiful things I have heard about?"

"Alas, Madame, were it next week, perhaps, we could ask you to visit, and a Sister could show you our treasures, but"—she paused, her gentle face concerned at the discourteous necessity, "but there is at this very week an Annual Retreat, and all is of the quietness and repose. You understand?"

I understood only too well. I had not known of the Retreat, or would not have suggested a disturbance of that prayerful "quietness". I apologized, and was about to leave when the little Sister, after some thought, suddenly said,

"Madame is of the faith, no?"

"No, ma Sœur."

"Would it be of the interest to see the paintings in our Superior's parlour?"

"But of great interest. I have seen the portrait of your beloved Foundress in Quebec long ago, and I see here a copy of that picture."

The little Sister beamed. "And here is one," she switched on a light (it was a strange anomaly to see the spidery electric light wires webbing over the ancient,

rough stone walls of the Convent), "*très belle et très anciens*, of the Vision of St. Ursula, the Patron of our Order "

It was a big, old canvas, the unexplainable look of age on its surface. The little Sister was explaining

"There, Madame, is the Saint, and the Voice is speaking to her from this cloud here, Oh most *sacré*

hour, most blessed hour! For there, as the painting tells, there, Madame—" she paused. This little nun was not without her dramatic gift. Standing with eyes upraised to the canvas, hands tightly clasped upon the snowy whiteness of her deep cape-collar, she made, all unconsciously, a much more perfect picture than the rather obscure com-



position above her. "There, Madame, is the Wish of Heaven shown to Our First Foundress, the Sainted Ursula, and from that Vision came our Ursuline Order, teaching wherever we are called, always under the direct guidance of Saint Ursula."

Infidel though one may be, there is a lot to be said for any faith, sect, community or philosophy that can inspire such an absolute belief in its teachings, such utter acceptance of a particular doctrine, and such unquestioning certainty, as was shown by the little Sister of St. Ursula de Trois Rivières. Whether such unquestioning faith is a good thing is perhaps a moot point, but it has a value in a peace of mind that is not very apparent to-day.

The rest of our tour of that big, bare room, with the grille all across one end, behind which nuns and pupils of the school talk to visitors, came to an end, and we were once again in the hall, dark and rather chill, even with the bright sunlight streaming through a broad door at the far end.

"I wish to thank you very specially, ma Sœur, for your kindness and courtesy."

"A pleasure, Madame. For it seems, Madame is of a much interest and appreciation for"—she smiled—"one not of our faith."

Was there a tiny twinkle in her eye? I do not know, but I felt quite glad to be accounted that hybrid of animals, not quite of the sheep, but, on the other hand, not entirely a goat!



Meantime Robin had gone off somewhere, thinking I would be much longer seeing a whole museum.

It was hot and somnulent that July afternoon. The stately houses along the street bathed in the mellowness of years, basked in the sun, their deep windows heavy-lidded with sleep, and the soft river breezes moved the elms into whispering cadences above the swinging river.

A certain *dolce far niente* prevented me from starting a sketch that day—it was too hot, or so I told myself, one excuse being as good as any other—and drifting down to the Esplanade, I sat dreaming in the green shade.

“Nicolet, Radisson, explorers of the wilderness,  
 Voyageurs, Missioners, Coureurs de Bois,  
 Desgrosheillers the Trader, and dark-eyed Jemmerais  
 Dreaming dreams, and faring forth to unknown shores,  
 And Lavendrye, the great soul,  
 West and ever westward  
 Over to the sunset  
 Onward to the Rockies,  
 Planting France’s lilies on the foothills of the Plains ”

Names here, like trumpets, sounding softly, incessantly, down the echoing years.

Starting out of day-dreams, among the ghosts of Three Rivers, I saw a substantial, grinning non-ghost sitting on the railing smoking a villainous pipe.

"Hello," said Robin "Do you remember me? I'm the ice man."

"No ice to-day," I murmured, and at my voice Dog-dog got up and stretched hopefully. "How long have you two been there?"

"Hours and hours," they replied. "But not daring to disturb your rhythmic snores—".

"Nothing of the sort," I snorted. "You two have no historical sense."

"There you are quite wrong," said Robin seriously. "I have found out a lot of interesting places and things. This place is bulging with history, and that's the oldest house in the place." He pointed down the street behind. "And another thing," we were walking away from the River and elms and the Ursuline Convent, "I have found out that the much-heralded Chateau de Blois is an hotel made out of an old house, fairly old anyway, and gets its name from the Chateau in France, not from any special local reason."

Soon we arrived at the oldest house; it is by the roadside, and one would never notice it, were it not for the fearsome cannon pointing directly at the front door from a tiny park across the narrow street. Rather disconcerting to open one's front door and find a yawn-

ing cannon there, in its pugnacious, lively days.

The de Tonnancourt house was built in 1680, of fine stone brought out in ballast by some white-winged sailing ship from France. The Governor of Trois Rivières lived here, keeping a simple state as befitted the First Gentleman of the district. The settlement's stout stockade near by, and the gibbet raised giant arms beside the Recollect Church further down Notre Dame. Below, on the River shore, lay the canoes of the intrepid *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois*, with sometimes a tall ship out of St. Malo anchored in the current; and the life of Trois Rivières lived out its pioneer day in this tree-shaded few acres beside the Governor's house.

Now the house belongs to a Religious Order, and as we walked down a side street, a white-coifed nun stood, hands folded, beside a back window of the oldest house, watching, across the trampled courtyard, the building of a huge brick extension to the Convent that was in noisy progress at that time. Standing there, by the low window, where in 1680 the Governor had built himself this house in the wilderness, the old nun looked toward the steel and brick construction, probably thinking how much more comfortable the new building would be, so convenient and more suitable than the low-ceilinged, ancient house with its uneven floors and steep stairs.

The Chateau de Blois turned out to be a thoroughly modern hostelry converted from an old family house into, first, a hydropathic and then an hotel. An extensive redecoration scheme has mainly obscured the original

fabric, but parts, like the winding, nicely proportioned Georgian staircase, cannot be totally annihilated by modern marbleizing, and the fireplace in the dining-room, though rather redundant, is good. Supported by a pair of what a young friend called "Katie-dids," meaning upper-half female figures, that lose track of themselves in a maze of carved draperies that turn into pillars, this fireplace seems an anachronism in its present setting. The whole house is all curlyques and whatnottery, and is great fun, from the genuine marble woodwork to the outdoor beer-drinkery in the hotel garden.

Sitting in the "Coin au Normandie" court of the hotel one Saturday noon, we admired the tree that grows up and goes straight through the roof, as well as the amazing creepers that are painted onto the whitewashed brick wall. To make the creepers even more surprisingly real, wooden trellis has been erected, and the painted greenery creeps solemnly all up the inside of every trellis! Yellow-and-green-striped umbrellas covering little tables spread out on the grass lent a distinctly Continental touch, though I must say, hardly Normandy as I remembered it. There

it was a cobblestone courtyard flanked by the cowshed, and we sat on a comic opera balcony covered with mauve wisteria that overlooked the dungheap, while our buxom hostess, very *négligée*, did the family washing in the stream at the south end of the



yard—and the omelette and white wine were something to remember for a lifetime. Different days; different ways!

One really Norman feature, however, were the races, on a Sunday. We heard of them indirectly, in French, and therefore got a little mixed; but did not discover that until some time later.

At the races in Brittany there was a fair as well, with wheels of fortune and "Aunt Sally" shies, and round dances by the peasantry in their picturesque costumes. My Aunt Elizabeth won a round on the wheel of fortune, and was presented, delightedly and with appropriate comment, with a white china chamber pot decorated with a large unwinking blue eye. My Aunt Elizabeth is a decent British matron, and has never played games of chance since that day.

Robin has been talking French rather largely lately. Having acquired the information about the races, he then started on the waiter, like this.

"Un serviette papier, s'il vous pla'."

Waiter, shouting into dim interior of hotel, "Gimme another paper serviette, Alf."

To wear a blazer with a badge on it is inviting adventure, and I am sure that is why Robin does it, though he says it is for comfort. Once before, he and a friend were taken for members of a baseball team; and another time some fishermen in the Maritimes took him for a customs preventive officer, but he says that never in a misspent life, until to-day, has he been taken for a race course tout!



When that happened, and he was mistaken for one of the twenty-four racing men in the Coin au Normandie garden, he became so horsey that we practically had hay for lunch! Later in the day, some American tourists that he picked up took him for a guide and he directed them all around Trois Rivières, hoping for a tip, but they suddenly realized he was just another tourist and the money-making scheme fizzled out.

We would certainly have gone to the horse races on the Sunday afternoon, had they been horse races, but they turned out to be canoe races, and International ones at that, so Robin's horseyness at lunch time was rather wasted.



## CREWEL-WORK—THE VOYAGEURS

THE International Canoe Races are becoming a very definite feature of the year in Trois Rivières. Teams come up from the States, from the Maritime Provinces, and from all over Quebec. And we were experiencing our usual good luck in being there on the very day the race was to take place. Like many others, we had known nothing of this colourful and exciting contest, but when Sunday came, we were all ready to go up to Shawinigan to see the Hill Portage stage of the gruelling paddle. It was not a good day; tremendous thunder storms had broken over the district for a day or two, and this day the rain was turned on and off alternately every half hour until noon, when it changed shifts, stopped for a whole hour, and back to schedule for the rest of the afternoon. But in that dry hour the start of the last lap of the race took place at Shawinigan.

Previously, to us, Shawinigan had always been the place where the dividends didn't come from, and therefore we had a good look around the town, the pulp and paper places, and the wonderful power development scheme. The audacity of men who harness the great rivers and make landscape gardens out of lake bottoms never fails to amaze me, and here again stood the literal, concrete example of man's success in diverting the course of Nature. There was food for a lot of pseudo-philosophy

in this, but we had no time to philosophize then, as the race was due to start at the other end of the town in a few minutes. Of course we got lost, ended up in the railway depot beside an empty platform, and there was no one to ask; everyone was at the starting place on the river front, or swarming up the steep portage path beside the dam. When we finally arrived, at the start, a big crowd was gathering by a school, and up on the three balconies of the building a number of young, very young fledgling priests chatted and craned over with all the enthusiasm of school boys on holiday. A car drew up with a brilliant scarlet canoe on the roof. A crowd of hero-worshipping small boys rushed over as the canoeist leaped out of the car, and very carefully got his canoe off the roof and onto his shoulders, trotting, with the peculiar loping run of the *voyageur*, through the opening crowd to the float. Soon the graceful craft is in the water, and other canoes, brilliant blue, green, and a shining natural wood one, each with its crew of two husky *voyageurs*, limbering up in swift, swinging strokes before the delighted crowds on the river edge. Now a vivid yellow canoe is being eased into the water by admiring friends of the tall young competitor. He and his companion are fine specimens—tall, slim youths, deeply bronzed skin covering rippling muscles in perfect condition. One lad has a figured bandana handkerchief covering his head and tight about the forehead, to prevent the sweat running into his eyes. His scarlet shirt and buckskin trousers are the traditional costume of the French-Canadian *voyageur* of history, but

the white running shoes are not a part of the traditional *voyageur's* costume. More husky brown men arrive in shorts, in sweaters, in long pants, most with brilliant-coloured bandanas around their heads, and many in parti-coloured shirts. The French-Canadian flair for the picturesque and colourful in costume as well as in other directions is well shown in a competitor who turns up in spotless white pants, a crimson top with long royal blue sleeves, and a green paisley-patterned bandana about his black hair, and then he got into a sunflower yellow canoe! Incredible colouring; a virile picture against the grey of the river and sky.

The crowd is thicker, and something is happening down by the float. Suddenly a blue canoe shoots out into the stream, two straining backs bending in the immemorial rhythm of the *voyageur*, two paddles flashing in absolute unison, and the first team of the great race is away on the course. Fortunately the rain is taking its hour off, and the start is made in grey, semi-dry mistiness. Canoes shoot away at short intervals, and then we leap into the car and run up through the town to the big dam, again noticing the gardens of the City Hall, a blaze of magnificent bloom, beautifully kept, and a joy to the heart of any gardener. Arriving at the road leading to the top of the dam over which the racing canoeists must portage their craft down into the river below, again we begin asking in the crowd for information about the whole event. Two youths tell us that the race is in two laps, this being the second and final stretch; that the race is

arranged by the Radisson Club of Trois Rivières.

"And how many canoes can compete?"

"Any lot, Mister." (They were English-speaking, or anyway they thought they were) "One man she's in, or maybe one club she make two teams, four mans, and all can come quick, for the race she's O K."

"Oh," we said, noncommittally. "And how many are there still in the race to-day?"

They thought deeply, and I sympathized with them. I can never remember numbers in French

"She is ten, then four," said the interpreter, beaming. "Yesterday, look you, Mister, some mans she drop out. No guts," he added surprisingly. "The small portage, one two she is bad, and the long portage she is one-helluva-God-damn-bitch, see you "

Robin said he did. I was too fascinated to speak

"Then what happened?" asked Robin, hoping for further revelation on the art of the *voyageur*.

The linguist spat. "Pah," he said, "those yellow-livered sons of—" I shuddered and waited—in vain. Something had diverted our friend. He ran to the edge of the road and, leaning perilously over a shaky fence, gazed up the river.

" 'Ooray, 'ooray," he cried. "They come, *Mon Dieu*, is it that the *canaille* of La Tuque she win? Never! She cannot 'appen." The fence shook under his clutching hands and a spate of French fell upon the misty air. We saw two canoes rounding the curve of the river up-stream, close, but one canoe was definitely in the lead, and ap-

parently it was the wrong canoe for our friend, for the flow of fulminating French continued. As the little craft drew nearer and almost under our look-out place, there was a tense silence. The back canoe was putting on a spurt, and even though it had started on its handicap time later than the scarlet leader, the yellow now drew up to the foot of this portage within a few seconds of its predecessor. The crowd went wild, and our friend, waving and shouting " 'Ooray, 'ooray, O.K. That canoe, look at, she is the Shawinigan canoe, she is win, sure-dammit-to-hell-t'ing. 'Ooray!'" We hoped he was right, but as the sweating crews pushed up the steep hill path, one man carrying the paddles and pads, the other with the canoe on his shoulders, we wondered. For at the hill-top, when the man under the canoe changed over for the equally steep downgrade portage, we noticed that he seemed too fagged for a contestant at this early stage of the long pull down to Trois Rivières. Soon the canoes were in the water on the other side of the portage, and the yellow led by a few strokes, though to our untrained eyes the scarlet crew had seemed fresher as they sweated up the hill.

"Hard work," said Robin. "And they have to go ashore when they arrive at Three Rivers, portage their canoes all the way up to the Flambeau, and whoever gets there first wins. That Shawinigan stroke paddler looked pretty fagged; shouldn't wonder if he fails, like the men our friend remarked about—" He grinned. "No guts," he said reminiscently, "the yellow-livered—"

"That," I interrupted firmly, "will be enough."  
But Shawinigan did win after all

The Canoe Races keep alive the old traditions, for Trois Rivières and all the St Maurice Valley is associated with the *voyageur* and *coureur de bois*. It was to the trading post at the mouth of the St. Maurice that the wild adventurers brought their furs and the spoils of their hunts. And in the settlement of Trois Rivières the sturdy, hard-living carefree *voyageurs* had their homes, albeit they were seldom in them!



The French-Canadian *voyageur* was a product of the New World, an outcrop of the first few generations of *habitant* farmers, and it can be said that they, with their brothers, the *coureurs de bois*, constituted the first Social Problem (with a capital P!), after the "How to Get Wives for the Farmers" problem had been so successfully solved by the Bride ships from France. The *voyageur* was a trained man, usually with a definite fur-trading right; the *coureur de bois* was supposedly a hunter and fur trader,

but as time went on, the ranks of both fraternities became filled with wild younger sons and unscrupulous adventurers, until the woods were full of them, and the Indians were full of their alcohol. Now when an Indian gets full of alcohol, nothing stops him, and many of the incidents in outlying communities, sudden treachery of trusted Indians, sporadic raids and general harmful mischief, could be put down to the rogue Frenchmen among the *coureurs de bois* and the *voyageurs*. At one time the Church became very exercised at the loose life in the woods, and in a Parochial Letter, Bishop Laval made some very caustic references to those "unregenerate sons of decent citizens of this town of Kebec, who unlawfully leaving their homes for the woods, did debauch the Indians with illegal drink to the damnation of their immortal souls and the hindrance of law in the New World."

In spite of vigorous disapproval, the *coureur de bois* continued to roam, and the *voyageur* to sing his lusty songs along the waterways of Canada.

"I paddle my birch bark canoe  
In the fresh weather  
And I have braved every weather  
On the St. Lawrence River.

My canoe is of fine birch bark  
Stripped from the silver birch tree  
Sewn together with roots  
The paddles made of white birch.

It is when I come to the portage  
I take my canoe on my back



Set it on my head upside down;  
It is my roof for the night.

All along the banks have I wandered,  
Beside St. Lawrence River,  
I know the savage tribes,  
And their different languages."

So sang the St. Maurice *voyageur*, paddling upstream from Trois Rivières, broke again. But why worry? There is all the wealth of the wilderness before him for the taking—beaver and raccoon, squirrel and muskrat—there in the deep forest, and a good price for the pelts at the markets in Kebec next season. Money to burn then, and in spite of the Bishop, wine, women and song. Hooray for "*le voyageur*."

But the lusty, singing *voyageur* paddling up the St. Maurice was only following on the immemorial trail of the Indians. The Attikameguas, a tribe of the Algonquins, coming down in the early days of the white man to trade in their furs, gave the clue to one of the Jesuit Fathers, Buteau, who followed the swiftly moving Indian canoes on the trail of the St. Maurice right up beyond Shawinigan, exploring and preaching as he went. All went well the first time Father Buteau attempted the trail; the next year some of the trouble-making enemy Iroquois



captured the missionary and tortured him to death. But the first white man had seen the beautiful valley, and in due course his fellow-Frenchmen followed in the paddle strokes of the intrepid missionary. Ten years later, about 1661, there was a massacre up in the Attikamaguas' country, apparently some forty or fifty miles north of Grand Mère. And so it went on, the missionary, the trader, the *voyageur*, and then the settler, to finish off the ever-repeated pioneer pattern of Canada.

In 1666, the same year that London burned to the ground, in Paris, the astute and far-seeing Colbert, as clever an administrator as France ever produced, ordered Talon, the Intendant of New France, to look for iron ore, that an iron industry might be established in the Colony. No one had any idea about iron in Quebec, no one even knew if such an ore existed, but they started to look. What made them start in the district of Cap de la Madeleine is not divulged. Maybe it was a religious superstition that in the shadow of the Shrine something might be found, and found it was. But it was iron oxide, which to-day is used as a substance that goes into the making of paint. The man who was in charge of the operations for finding iron (quite an undertaking, when one comes to think of it—just step out into Canada and find iron, please, and see you get home in time for tea!) was Sieur de la Potardière, and he had no use for the iron oxide, so Colbert's scheme for founding an industry on the St. Lawrence failed. However, the colonists were intrigued with the idea, and some continued to search about for iron deposits. From now on

the whole thing sounds remarkably like a hole-in-the-ground northern mine report. Someone did find the ore, but it was a long way farther up the St. Maurice. The local inhabitants got the iron fever, and a company was formed to build blast furnaces and work the ore. In 1670, Count de Frontenac, then Governor of New France, visited the mines and sent in a glowing report to the French Government, in far-away Paris. (More than ever like a modern mine report!) And of course, nothing at all was done. Possibly the then administration was dealing with the matter of the King's privy purse, or how to divert the poor relief monies into the lap of the latest favourite. Anyway, the Colonists themselves, after waiting indefinitely, began to work the deposits in a small and inefficient way, but sufficient for their needs. Then about sixty years later a man called de Frenchville erected the first forges. And if the thing went true to form, the company doubled its share issue! But Mr. de Frenchville lacked experts in iron, and in six years the production proved too small to pay the way, and the company went "bust". Then, with the well-known optimism of the miner, plus some pull, a subsidy from the French Government and imported skilled labour, the company got going again. The company was now in the Directors'-Room-with-mahogany-table class, and for a matter of a hundred and fifty years, well-dressed gentlemen of well-fed girth sat in the directors' chairs, and it is possible that even the shareholders received some dividends, although this seems rather a lot to hope for!

It was only with the press of modern industry, the improvements in methods and the general economic upheavals of the nineteenth century that the St. Maurice iron workings were forced to close down, leaving behind a record unique in the annals of North American industry. No other industrial enterprise of the sort had lasted for so long; so in spite of its early ups and downs, the St. Maurice iron proved a bonanza in its small way. In the hundred and fifty years of its working, the ore sufficed, but in 1883 the scarcity became acute and the difficulty of getting charcoal for the fires was so apparent that the old forges finally drew their fires, and the first iron forges in America came to an end. Late in the eighteen-hundreds, the old buildings were standing, the manager's house, blast furnaces and workings were in good condition, but to-day there are only piles of picturesque ruins. When the British took over Canada from the French regime, very special emphasis was laid on the forges of the St. Maurice Valley, and in the capitulation papers the workings were mentioned. The British, following the policy of General Murray that has paid such overwhelming dividends ever since, took over the iron works, but all the employees kept their old jobs and were so well treated that the production went on at even greater speed for the new masters, and the local dinner pail was full to overflowing.

To-day the valley of the St. Maurice cradles many industrial enterprises of the most modern type.

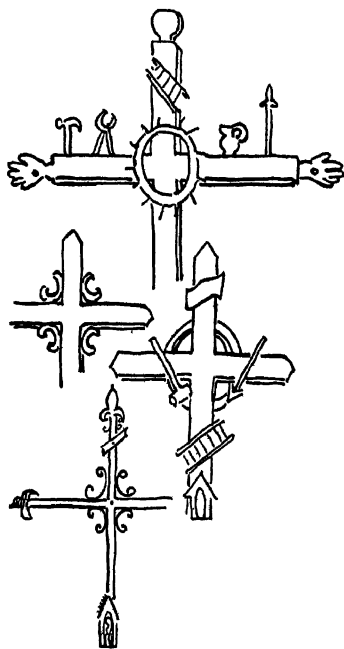
It is well said that the main stream of the world's news-print flows out of the Province of Quebec by the St. Law-

rence River, for when the St Maurice Valley and the Lake St. John district empty their joint mill produce into the holds of the River shipping, and half the newsprint of the world is borne seawards from Laurentian hills and valleys deep in peaceful repose, to the great cities, strident with news of hate and death—

\* \* \*

Pierre Boucher, the first Governor of Trois Rivières, who knew all about the trees, and the fruits, and growing things of this part of New France, also knew that he must build a small chapel somewhere about, that he and all good Catholics might have a place to worship in the wilderness. So in 1661 he erected a tiny oratory on Cap de la Madeleine

The trading post at Cap des Trois Rivières had become a busy place, with its periodical reunions of Indians, its returning traders and the actual settlers, who were becoming more and more numerous, and the Jesuit missionaries found their fields of endeavour spreading. The Cap at that time belonged to the Seigniory of Sieur Jacques de la Ferte, Abbé of Sainte Marie Madeleine, who had received it from the Company of a Hundred Associates. As the need for a church became obvious, in 1651 the Abbé



gave the Cap portion of his lands to the Jesuits on condition that part be put aside as a retreat for Christianized Indians, to keep them out of the way of the illicit liquor traffic, then at terrific heights, and also to protect these converts from the savage onslaughts of other Indian tribes, mainly the fighting Iroquois. The gift of land was gratefully accepted and renamed Cap de la Madeleine in honour of the donor, and it was on this spot that Pierre Boucher decided to build his chapel ten years later.

Ever since that day "The Cap" has been connected with the Chapel of the Holy Rosary, and the little stone church that succeeded the first Boucher Oratory in 1714 is the oldest stone church on the American continent preserved in its original state and design.

Visiting Cap de la Madeleine for the first time is a



mixed experience, or so we found, one perfect Sunday evening in July. The abundance of light blue ribbons, gilt festoons and poster-like plaques entirely obscured the upper parts of a large rotunda, while more gilt picked out all possible bits of decoration about the

brightly electric-lit walls. Surely this could not be the ancient Shrine? We tiptoed out again, leaving the perfumed incense drifting lazily over the hundreds of bent heads. Outside, people poured up and down the wooden steps, going in and coming out of the rotunda. Finally we spotted a small door in the end of an ancient rubble stone building, and swinging it open, found ourselves in a tiny chapel absolutely crammed to the door with the kneeling multitude. This was the ancient Shrine, but one cannot tour historic churches of miniature proportions in the midst of a Saint's Day Vesper Service, so we backed hastily out and came back another time in mid-week.

The playful, gusty breeze of the River blew about the Shrine that day, rippling the water of the ornamental ponds and lakes about the landscaped grounds of the Cap. The fourteen Stations of the journey to Calvary are spaced through the grounds, and at almost every Station a figure with bent head stood murmuring a prayer, and the faint click of turning rosaries caught in a vagrant breeze came to us as we stood beside the little Flavel Brook.

Here came Champlain and camped one night in his early wanderings, and looking about the lovely wild promontory, he noted in his diary that he had stayed by the Flavel Brook, a peaceful place, winding and exceeding beautiful. To-day the Flavel, encased in cement of a surprising cementishness, winds where it is put, into a pond with a statue of the Virgin as centrepiece, and straight out again, still corseted in cement, to run eventually into the St. Lawrence under the arch of the famous

Bridge of the Rosary. A regimented little water course, somehow dispirited, and lacking the character of Champlain's "winding and exceeding beautiful" brook.

As we turned back beside the stream toward the Shrine itself, two nuns approached us, walking against the breeze, their voluminous black habits billowing out, while they both held onto the stiff white coif that folded back against their fresh-coloured faces. Both seemed to find mild amusement in the situation, but it looked most uncomfortable to me, particularly as one Sister was carrying a large basket of flowers intended for some shrine or chapel in the grounds. But it was a pleasant picture, there among the thin, tall trees, with shrine-dotted grass beside winding paths, and the ruffled, blue River behind.

\* \* \*

Sketching on Notre Dame Street of Trois Rivières was peaceful, and the place has an air, a very distinct atmosphere, with its old buildings and glorious elm trees. Alas, in building a new school, the nuns had felled three magnificent aristocrats of the forest, cut down in sound old age to make way for stone and very red brick; trees felled and bricks substituted to the glory of God, I suppose, but it is a pity. After all, we are told that "only God can make a tree" about twice every day over the air, and for once I appreciated the sentiment. Almost anyone can make a brick. The corner of St. Jean is sad without its old elms.

The sketch progressed, but the sun was shifting on its appointed course and the light changes quickly about noontime. A gate farther down Notre Dame opened, and



a brown frocked Franciscan monk came towards me, the wooden prayer beads at his girdle clinking softly as he walked, and the clopping shuffle of his sandals on the stones tapping out the rhythm of the religious past. As he approached, he looked at the artist sitting in the gutter, and seemed interested, so, taking courage, I said, "Good morning, Father," politely

He slowed a trifle in his stride, and I had time to admire the fine, high forehead, under a tiny skull-cap, piercing blue eyes, and the trim Vandyke beard, plentifully sprinkled with silver.

"Good morning, my daughter." He raised a slim-fingered hand in blessing as he walked on about his priestly business, the very essence of old Trois Rivières.

In time, a crowd of the inevitable children gathered about my easel. All was well until one vastly unwashed small boy, accompanied by his sister, arrived on the scene. The sister had been marketing, not, I am afraid, very wisely, for peeping coyly out of a flowered cretonne work bag was an amazing piece of meat. The sun shone hotly, and the meat responded in full. Finally, glancing at the bag and observing the five large blue flies disporting themselves on the meat, I decided to leave the scene of art and go down by the river. But instead I found myself inside one of the most interesting buildings in Canada, the old Recollect Monastery, now the Anglican Church. Just as the packing up of the easel was accomplished, a party of American visitors drew up and got out of their car. Trying the door of the Church, as I had already done twice

that morning, they looked around, saw me, and came over. To almost everybody, an artist is always two things, mad, but quite safe, and often correctly formal people think nothing of starting conversation with an artist, because, my dear, after all, they are crazy, poor things, and we don't have to know them afterwards! Little children and simple *habitants* flock, breathing heavily, about the imbecile who paints the picture of Gran'mère's old open oven that is a disgrace to the neighbourhood, so dilapidated is it. When the picture is finished they offer the painter (poor soul, he cannot have much to eat if all he gets is for selling Gran'mère's old oven), a fine white loaf with country butter and some milk in a mug. (And may Le Bon Dieu see this poor artist and give him enough food, for, of a certainty, he is afflicted like the thirteenth son of Marie Célèste at the store.)

So of course the American lady asked me how to get into the Recollect Church.

"Do you speak English?"

"Yes, I do. Can I be of any help?"

"How do we get into this place?" She pointed to the locked door. And at that moment the Vicar of St. James Anglican Church came out of his house. We descended upon him in a body. Would he be good enough to open the door and let us see the famous old building? The Vicar would be delighted; in fact, he would take us in himself, through the house next the chapel.

Entering a low-ceilinged room, with scrubbed wooden floor all uneven at the doorways from the tread of many

feet, we glanced, in passing, into a long room used nowadays as a church hall or vestry, and so to the right, through a thick door into the most historically diversified building in Trois Rivières, or perhaps anywhere else in Quebec.

The first impression is one of essential good taste in the English late-Georgian manner. Tall windows, wood panelling, and a very fine chancel railing; simple altar and the glowing jewel-like beauty of the priceless oriental rug spread before it combine to give the quietly reverent atmosphere usual in old churches in the depths of an English countryside, but not at all usual among the somewhat exuberant religious interiors of the Renaissance period, so generally favoured in French Canada.

The Vicar of St James was speaking.

"Yes, the Anglican congregation is of course small, but not negligible by any means. There are about six or seven hundred non-



Roman Catholics for whom services are held in this Church."

"This building," said one of the American visitors, "it must be old?" He looked at the thick stone walls and deep-set windows.

"This has perhaps the most varied history of any place hereabouts, and," the Vicar added, "it is of special interest to our neighbours from across the Line," smiling at our four companions, "because here within these walls General Arnold made his headquarters, after his victorious conquest of Montreal."

At the time of which the Vicar spoke, General Montgomery was preparing to attack Quebec, and all the St. Lawrence and Richelieu River were in the hands of the American Army. Only Quebec itself remained to be captured, and all Canada, which had belonged to the British for almost twenty years, would become part of the newly formed American Republic. Trois Rivières fell to General Arnold, and in this building he planned his progress down the St. Lawrence, and the meeting that was to take place between his army and the main force under General Montgomery. Together they planned to take the old walled City of Sieges, Quebec. Did it seem an easy mark to Arnold, as he sat beneath one of these deep windows, planning and thinking? Montgomery had told him of the poor walls of the fortress city, and Montgomery knew what he was talking about, because at one time he had been an officer in a British regiment stationed in Quebec. Montgomery said that the French had skimped and

grafted in the building of the fortifications, at the time of that rascal Bigot. There was a political rascalion, thought the strait-laced General; a man who sold Canada for the best part of seventy million francs in graft. Ah, well, soon now there would be no French or even British rule in the Canadas. The time was getting on, and surely Montgomery was right in saying that the mixed French-Canadian and British garrison would never stick together in defence of a beleagured, starving city. The French Canadians could hardly like the English much, with only twenty years passed since the conquest. No, the thing was to get down to Quebec and finish off the campaign and get back to the great new Republic for which one had fought so long, and of which we are, God knows, justly proud. But here is a despatch rider. What news does he bring? "In here, Orderly, I will receive the messenger in here." Did brave Arnold sit behind a polished table here in this building, thinking, planning or reading despatches in the early autumn days of 1775, with the elms rustling outside the windows and the marching feet of his Continental Army waking the echoes on Rue Notre Dame? Perhaps.

Listening further back, the echoes of another scene cling to the walls of the old building. Twenty years before Arnold, another soldier called the Seigniors and landowners to swear allegiance to the British Crown, and the place appointed for this solemn rite was the old Recollect Monastery. Within these walls Colonel Burton made his headquarters, and welded Trois Rivières and the St.

Maurice lands onto the escutcheon of Britain. And long before him, a French Governor used the walls of the Monastery for posting the Proclamations of his King to the subjects of New France; the substantial shade of a great Canadian, Pierre Boucher, must surely walk across the shallow step and out beneath the elms of Notre Dame, to vanish in the shadows by the River that he loved.

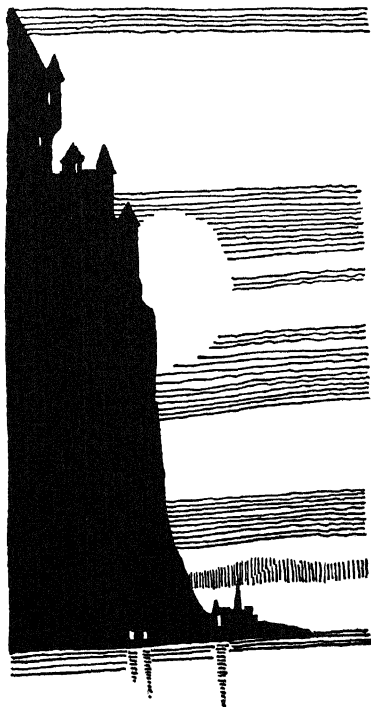
The gallant ghosts of Trois Rivières  
Walk proudly in the dappled shade  
Of whispering elms, and River runes  
Make music now as in their day.

Step proudly, ghosts of Trois Rivières,  
Beneath the elm trees' dappled shade,  
For here, by you, in Notre Dame,  
Great dreams were dreamed; much history made.



## DUNGAREE-TRAILER TALES

PROBABLY it is more romantic to come to Quebec by boat, to see it first from the River, the cliff rising sheer until, high above, tier on tier, the towers of the Chateau Frontenac seem to pierce the sky, tall buildings, tall cliffs, tall towers of many churches, and the bells ringing out the Angelus on a still summer evening, the great sweep of the St. Lawrence flecked with the westerning sun, and purple shadows lengthening under the bulwark of Cap Diamond. This is perhaps the best way, but we approached from landward, through the village of St. Foy, and, cruising slowly along the St. Foy Road, looked for a likely trailer camp. By this time we were beginning to doubt the wisdom of "trailing" in Quebec. There were a number of camps of all sorts, but eventually we found one standing back from the main road, in a large field, with trees. The old stables and outbuildings of the house had been converted into showers and wash places, and though rough, were whitewashed and very clean.



This trailer camp was exciting. Having tied up under a tree in a cul-de-sac of bushes, we jacked up the trailer, opened the windows and plugged in the electric current, all under the interested eyes of five other trailer families across the field, and a tall, dark janitor-park-keeper, who grunted noncommittally when addressed. We felt extraordinarily self-conscious, rather like fan dancers without fans, and slunk inside our trailer to regain our *savoir faire*.

To experience a trailer camp for the first time takes fortitude, and even Dogdog went under the car, thus inaugurating his habit of removing all oil from the bottoms of cars, a trait that he still possesses. Other trailers began to arrive, and we crept out in the dusk to view this new world. There was still a vast expanse of vacant field around, as most of the trailers parked nearer to the house, but next morning we awoke to find a palatial palace-on-wheels parked on the other side of our little clearing. It was shut up, and the noise of its owner's Cadillac leaving for town had awakened us. The time was six-thirty. Already the smell of frying bacon filled the air, and eventually it was too much for Robin, who got up, turned on the gasoline stove, and the aroma of coffee wafted out from our trailer also. A rough wooden table and some benches seemed to belong to our pitch, so spreading a checked cloth, we breakfasted outside in the cool of an August morning, under a noble maple tree.

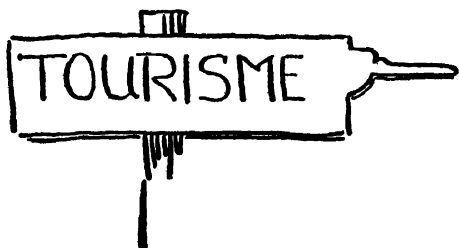
The worst of a trailer is the washing up. We tried to eliminate this altogether by using paper utensils, but



after the disaster of the paper cup, we gave up that idea. I had filled Robin's cup with hot tea, and the next time we looked there was a flat doily on the table and tea everywhere else!

After a smoke under the trees, we washed up, dressed up, locked up, and went into the town by the St. Louis Gate.

One of the first stops was at the Tourist Bureau. The matter of whether to take a trailer onto any of the by-roads of the province was a vexing one. We wanted information, but somehow, everyone was remarkably vague on the subject of trailers. Much informative literature was thrust upon us, some of it relevant, and we left the office laden with data re hunting, fishing, canoeing, camping, hiking and swimming, but nothing about trailing or trailer facilities.



"Better ask round the camp," said Robin, and we left it at that, going on down towards the River.

St. Louis Street is narrow, with grey old houses pushing in on either side. One old house is particularly interesting because to-day it provides quarters for some of the Military Officers, including the Brigadier commanding the district, and this is the same house in which the infamous Intendant Bigot installed his mistress in the last

days before the British conquest, when New France was rioting to its downfall.

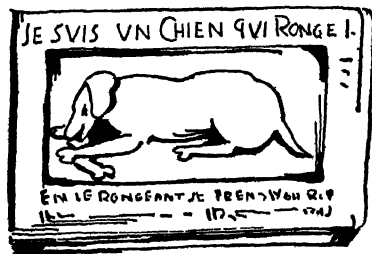
St. Louis Street continues on, past the oldest house in Quebec, known as Montcalm's House. Actually, this little place was the Headquarters office of the French General up to the time of his death at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, but he did not live there, or even die there. According to contemporary historians, the mortally wounded hero was carried in through the St. Louis Gate directly to the house of the Army Surgeon in Camp; the same house, some say, that belonged to the beautiful Angélique de Meloises. It may have been that the Surgeon commandeered space in this large house for his wounded men; or perhaps the lovely Angélique had fled the city, but it is almost certain that Montcalm died somewhere within the massive, grey stone walls of the house on St. Louis Street where the General Commanding in Quebec lives to-day.

In the Place d'Armes the old fashioned *caleches* stand, the horses chewing the bottoms out of aged nosebags, while hundreds of sparrows peck up the scattered grain from the cobblestones. These horses are well groomed and well fed. When it rains, the drivers put huge rugs carefully over their respective horses, crawl into the back seat of each *caleche*, pulling the rest of the rug over themselves, like a tent. All the surprised passer-by can see is a disconcerting mass with a horse face at one end, a human face at the other, and wheels in the middle!

The Chateau Frontenac makes a perfect background

for the animated scene in the Place d'Armes. Cars, busses and street cars mill about among the *caleches*, and pedestrians weave across the cobbles in the direction of the Anglican Cathedral, the Ursuline Convent, or down the hill past the famous Golden Dog Restaurant, towards the Basilica.

The Chien d'Or (The Golden Dog) hostelry on Buade Street is a landmark in Quebec history. In the seventeen-fifties, a prosperous merchant carried on business under that sign. Unfortunately he ran foul of Intendant Bigot of infamous memory, and from that day, one might say the Bigot racket closed down on merchant Philibert. The story of the feud is told in the fascinating historical novel by Kirby, as is the story of the beautiful vamp, Angélique de Meloises, mistress of the Intendant. Philibert was a man of courage, and it is said that he put up his famous sign of the dog gnawing a bone as a gesture of defiance. The enigmatic inscription was certainly composed by Philibert, and shows his smouldering sense of injury—



"I am the dog that gnaws a bone  
And in gnawing it I take my time

A time will come, which is not yet  
When I shall bite him, who has bitten me."

Intendant Bigot was so infuriated with this that he had the Golden Dog surrounded by soldiers, and, in the fray, Philibert was killed by a young officer called de Repentigny. Some time later, after the British conquest, de Repentigny went out to India, and the tale goes that Philibert's son followed him to Pondicherry, challenged him to a duel and killed him, to revenge his father. The threat of the Golden Dog came true in that case. As for Bigot, he fled from the fallen City of Quebec, not even waiting to make terms with the victorious British. Eventually he was recalled to France, tried for grand larceny, imprisoned, and made to pay back millions of monies he had stolen from the Colony that was no longer New France. So the prophecy of the Golden Dog was accomplished.

Later, towards the end of the seventeen-hundreds, the hostelry was owned by Miles Prentice who had a very pretty niece. Legend has it that the gallant Horatio Nelson, then the young Captain of the H.M.S. *Albermarle*, was so enamoured of her charms that he proposed marriage. The gallant Horatio was turned down. His ship was sailing, but he could not bear the idea of leaving so beautiful a lady, and tried to kidnap her. A more prudent friend persuaded Nelson not to attempt the abduction, and the lovely lady remained in Quebec. This is the legend, as told at the sign of the Golden Dog, but it is, unfortunately, not the true version. Probably more foundation exists in the story that it was Mistress Miles

Prentice who identified the body of General Montgomery after the American attack on Quebec in 1775. Montgomery had been an officer in Wolfe's army at the taking of Quebec in 1759. He and Guy Carlton were often in the Golden Dog together in the old days before the break-up of loyalties in the Americas. Picture the serious young Scotsman, Montgomery, arguing with his volatile Irish friend, Carlton, over a glass of Mine Host's best wine, neither dreaming that they, fellow-officers and good friends, would be the rival Generals fighting over well-remembered ground for the possession of Quebec, and the Golden Dog Inn. But so it was, and in 1775, Mistress Prentice saw Montgomery for the last time and was the first to identify the body of the defeated General. Doubtless it was General Carlton who ordered his old friend and dead enemy all the honours of a military burial.

Strange patterns appear in the tapestry of history, then as now—

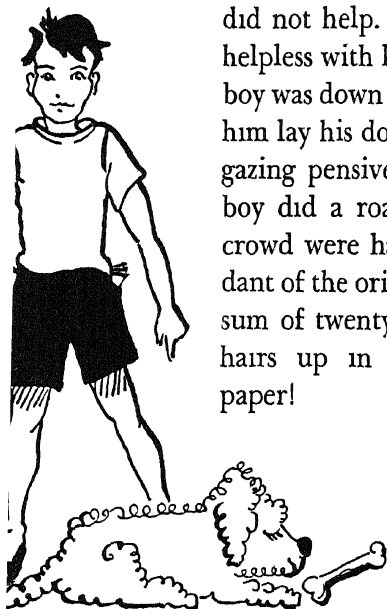
“For in the time we know not of  
Did fate begin  
Weaving the web of days” . . .

To-day the original Golden Dog has disappeared under the stones of the Post Office, but the Chien d'Or Restaurant carries on the old tradition for good food and drink; crisp French bread and native wine mingle happily with “Business Men's Lunches” for the nourishment of the visitor, and a pleasant vinous smell wafts up from the tavern below. Across the street, the Post Office also holds to tradition, for above its main doorway the orig-

inal Chien d'Or stone, inscription and all, is built into the arch, combining the new utilities with old legends.

Many tourists seek the Golden Dog both historically and dietetically, and in this connection we collected a delightful story.

In one of the old houses on Grande Allée lived a small boy with business instincts. For some time past his mother had noticed that the child was surprisingly well supplied with pocket money—certainly much more than his weekly twenty-five cents. She was worried, and the rather evasive answers to her tactful questioning did not help. Then one day a friend arrived, helpless with laughter, and it appeared that the boy was down in front of the Post Office. Beside him lay his docile golden Chesapeake retriever, gazing pensively at a mutton bone, while the boy did a roaring trade in what he told the crowd were hairs from the only living descendant of the original Golden Dog. For the paltry sum of twenty-five cents he even wrapped the hairs up in squares of rather recognizable paper!



\* \* \*

There is a most surprising second-hand store in Lower Town. It begins with violent linoleum and fades back through the gloom and cobwebs to French colonial *armoires* and Duncan Phyffe

tables. Robin had previously spotted a Governor Winthrop desk in the background, and we went to have a joint look at it. There was nothing there! A vast space had been cleared and around the edges lay a few dispirited wash-stands, iron bedsteads and unbearable bits of carpet. A thin man came out of a doorway and approached us hopefully. We declined the unsavoury auction sale goods and inquired for the Governor Winthrop desk in veiled terms.

"That funny-shaped old desk thing," says Robin, looking uninterested.

"Let's get out into the air," I remark. This is Robin's cue, of course.

"Don't you want to see the desk?"

"No." And at that, another man springs into the arena.

"Take Madame to the warehouse at once." He throws open a small door and personally conducts us out into the pouring rain. I glance at Robin, who is wiping soot out of his eye. The courtyard is filthy. We splosh down an alleyway, through a narrow lane and arrive at the most dilapidated building in Quebec. The rain seems to have cheered our guide, for he whistles a jitterbug tune continuously through a gap in his teeth. He unlocks the door and we enter the cave of the Forty Thieves. There, among some really beautiful pieces of English and French furniture, Sheffield plate and old china, our guide showed us a "veritable" Chippendale mahogany chest of drawers that would bring a blush of shame to the cheek of a car-

penter's apprentice. Next came a sound Victorian table, and a broken set of three very good Regency chairs at a fantastic price, but he was prepared to throw in an atrocious bronze equestrian statue if we took these.

"But where," said Robin, "is the funny little desk?"

"The desk? Ah, yes, the desk." He probed more deeply into the cavernous recesses of the huge barn. About now I spotted the chair hung up on a rafter in the gloom above.

"Look above your head, third along—American painted rush-bottomed chair," I hissed at Robin. And at this juncture our guide saw fit to tell us that the desk we had come to see had been sold to an American lady on Tuesday of last week and had been crated for the States that night. After that we were delighted to buy a genuine old, American-made, rush-bottomed chair for seventy-five cents, and felt never a qualm. Two can play at high pressure salesmanship! We whistled through our teeth as we tied the chair onto the back of the car, feeling that a little rain wouldn't hurt it, and probably would remove the dust of decades grimed into the rush seat. I am sure the dust of both the American Revolution and the Civil War were ingrained into the crevices of that chair.

The dust had given us a definite thirst, so we went to see our friends at Boswell's Brewery. There, in the cool gloom of Intendant Talon's vaults, we sat drinking beer, and talking of the days when these cellars were built, to store beer for the people, who, up to that time, had been drinking too much brandy. The Church, in the person



of Bishop Laval, and the State, in the person of Intendant Talon, took action. The Church issued an edict, and the State built a brewery. Henceforward, the consumption of alcohol decreased, and good, healthy beer flowed down thirsty *habitant* throats. Above the vaults to-day stands Boswell's Brewery, excellently carrying on a grand tradition. Some years ago, the Company decided to inaugurate a unique plan; to-day visitors can go down into the vaults that the great Talon built, sit at an original thick wooden table, hand-hewn from native oak, drink good draught beer, and most marvellous of all, everything is free! Later on in history, the Talon vaults were used by Bigot as prisons for the unfortunates who came up against his villainous will, but now the wonderfully built and preserved stone caves resound, not to the groans of unhappy prisoners, but to the cheerful, gurgling sound of happy drinkers.

Arriving back at the trailer camp one evening, a vacant plot greeted us where before had stood the ramshackle tent of the janitor and general factotem of the camp. It seems he had upped stakes and gone off on a hunting trip. This sounded odd, until we discovered that he was an Indian Chief, a great hunter and much in demand as a guide to millionaire hunting expeditions into the Quebec wilds.

Edgar Grand-Louis, whose delightful Indian name, Atirontara—the-Good-Hunter—is so much more romantic, is a minor Chief of the Hurons of Indian Lorette. Tall, slim, black-haired and swarthy, he mooched about the camp with the silent tread of his aboriginal ancestors. It

was this distinctive trait, and the string of eagle feathers strung across his tent door that made Robin suspect he was something special in camp attendants.

Atirontara, the-Good-Hunter, wore regrettable dungaree pants, a spotless white shirt (his wife was buxom, French, and a good laundress), beaded moccasins, and, on a rawhide thong around his neck, a silver medal of the Virgin. Atirontara, the-Good-Hunter, sold silly birch bark souvenirs, with a stinking contempt for the ridiculous tourists who choose to live in houses on wheels all the summer through. Perhaps his contempt overcame him, and the offer of the hunting guide job became a good excuse for a delightful freedom. Anyway, buxom French



wife, small son, silly birch bark souvenirs, Virgin medal and all, he folded his tent and slipped away to his natural haunts, a free Huron again for a few weeks of golden autumn weather.

It amused me to see that the French squaw of Atiron-tara, the-Good-Hunter, had crochet-trimmed linen pillow slips on the camp beds in the ramshackle tent, and a lazy-daisy stitched tea towel drying on the grass. A "quaint conceit" in a Huron teepee.

\* \* \*

One day we drove round the city walls and found gangs of men at work rebuilding and restoring the old stones. These walls have withstood many attacks at different times in history, but the attacks of time have proved more disastrous in the end. There is much restoration work in progress in Quebec City, and it is good to know that the old landmarks will not be lost in the toils of time. Quebec, the only walled city in America, is safe from attack to-day, if anywhere can be called safe in this age of flying death. Its old Citadel is more a lookout for tourists than a lookout for the enemy, and the ramparts form a pleasant, shaded walk. Thinking of modern Quebec, perhaps it is not so safe, after all, with its figure-losing French pastries, its steep, narrow streets full of rub-'em-out taxi drivers, dare-devil cyclists and bored horses dreaming about with their eyes shut.

Then there is the charming tale of Hygea, Goddess of Health, out on a spree. In the grounds of a very famous club, a little spring gleamed in the morning sunlight. To its marge came the venerable, the "night-befores", and health-fan members of the club, to sip of its bracing waters. Someone donated silvery fish to enhance the beauty of

Hygea's pool. Unfortunately the fish died. Then came the unimaginative analyst, who, with signs and portents, discovered the cure-all stream had its source in a sewage leak up the hill! So even in this day and age one lives dangerously in Quebec!

\*

\*

\*

Always the trailer camp was very quiet in mid-afternoon, as most of the population had gone out sight-seeing. It was hot, so taking out two of the seven chairs we had by now acquired, we sat in the shade of the maple tree and ruminated. The American rush-seated chair was fifteen shades lighter since being out in the rain, but was even now not in demand as a resting place! Soap and water and disinfectant were needed before risking the unknown germs and horrible livestock contained in the thick rushing of the seat. The other six chairs were very simple, typically French-Canadian *habitant* pieces. Two obviously had been made by Gran'père in his spare time, and put together with wooden pegs whittled with a clasp knife. The wooden seat of one chair was of pine, the back maple, two legs of some unknown hardwood, and two of birch, the whole under generations of various-coloured paint—red predominating—that flaked off in confetti-like showers. Another rather quaint chair had a maple slab back, the wood a deep honey colour—and as smooth as ivory, after Robin scraped off the layers of paint—and a seat made of eel-skin thongs, plaited like snow shoes. This type of *habitant* chair is very old and, we are told, getting rarer,

as the day of the mail order catalogue dawns upon the back-river villages and farms. Madame, the farmer's wife, prefers pressed golden oak and shiny veneer to Grand-père's old eel-skin thong chairs any day, and so we were able to get this quaint little bit of simple domestic history for another seventy-five cents ("jewed" down from a dollar in the incredible warehouse of Lower Town). We also got, thrown in with another transaction, as a token of esteem from the "jewed"-down manager of the second-hand store (who felt he had met his match—almost) three veranda chairs of sorts, with deer-thong seats which leave a decided impression upon anyone who is fool enough to sit on them.

As it drew near to six o'clock, the trailer population began to come home. First, the two sets of young marrieds with their respective children, who lived in the two small trailers under the small tree. Then the elderly couple, beautifully dressed and pressed. One wondered how they managed it, until they disembarked from their big car at the huge de luxe affair which rumour said had a shower and full sanitation, and a wash tub.

The business of keeping clean in a trailer is not so bad—showers and hot water in the camps makes cleanliness possible, but keeping pressed and fresh-looking is a problem we never quite solved. Summoned suddenly to a luncheon in one of the very smart apartments on Grande Allée, with one accord, we dived for the cupboard, stuck in the narrow opening, and after much grovelling on the floor inside, emerged with a limp rag of figured silk, one

semi-white buckskin pump, and an incredible mass of crumpled grey flannel that Robin said was his suit.

"What happened to it?" I asked.

"Well, it sort of failed to connect with the coat hanger when I put it away—sort of—" his voice trailed off, but rallied as he caught sight of the figured silk horror hanging limply from my hands, "—What's that, paint rag?"

"That is my only wearable dress," I said simply, "and the time is twelve-fifteen—"

We tore into town, found a Press-Pants-While-U-Wait place, stood over a deliberate old man while he rehabilitated our garments, and eventually arrived in a green and gold drawing-room looking fairly normal, but feeling like a couple of jumble sale remnants.

So it is with the sartorial side of trailing—slacks, sweaters and sun goggles, and eschew the social life if it demands any degree of formality in dress.

The cooking situation is quite good, particularly if the weather is fine, as the stove can be taken out into the open. Broiled steak, cooked on a stove under a sunset sky, a brook babbling near, and the crickets chirping in the grass; the smell of coffee mingling with the evening smell of dew on hot ground—a lovely content-making experience. But when it rained and we had to cook inside the trailer, we fed exclusively on boiled eggs and limp lettuce—the latter because the icebox had sprung an irreparable leak and always flooded the floor if we were weak enough to keep any ice in it. But the sink was perfect! Green enamel, with one shiny pump-like tap. Only one

serious event in the early days of our trailing is connected with the sink. I washed up, light-heartedly pulled out the plug, and all the water swooshed down onto Dogdog, who was lying in the shade under the trailer. However, we removed the tea leaves and all was well.

Other trailers arrived, and then, to our horror, two colossal busses full to the axles with educational-looking women. Every window had a sight-seeing face, the luggage racks on top overflowed with competent-looking bags, and on the front of the radiator a huge notice read "Endless Caverns."



"Endless Caverns," mused Robin, "I wonder—" and disappeared towards the huge canteen bus that was parked near the house. Some time later he returned. "They are," he remarked.

"Who, what, when and where?" I inquired casually.

"The forty-four famished females," said he.

"You mean the two sight-seeing bus loads?"

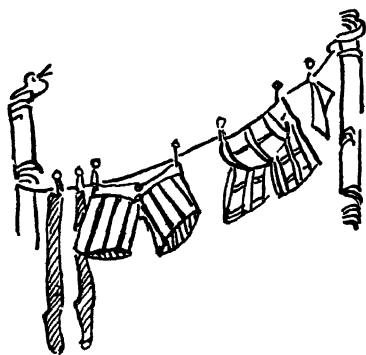
"Of course. The cook says they eat like an army of grasshoppers." He paused. "They laughed at my joke."

"Who did, and what joke?"

"The cooks, of course. When I saw them ladling out great dishes of meat and vegetables, I said, 'The label on the busses seems about right to me,' and they said, 'What labels?' and I said, 'The labels saying "Endless Caverns," and those women must be, if they eat all that food.' " The silence lasted for half a minute—"And they laughed," added Robin, wistfully.

"Ha, ha, joke over," said I, with absent-minded cruelty, my fascinated eye upon forty-four women getting out bed rolls, blankets, tooth brushes, and as strange an assortment of night attire as I've ever seen. Even my extensive observation of clothes lines about the world had left me unprepared for the miscellany of this exhibition. But it just shows how people can sleep, even under the most adverse conditions, and among unthinkable horrors!

During the next day, we got to know the two couples in the small trailers. Like ourselves, they seemed more permanent than other trailer families. The acquaintance



developed over our initial antipathy to a couple who lived at the top of the field, under a sketchy fly-tent attached to a decrepit car. It was not so much antipathy to the man and woman as to their dish cloths and general lingerie which flapped continuously day and night on the front fence of our

select camping ground, and added no social tone to the neighbourhood.

"I wish that girl would take in those awful striped underpants of her husband," said a voice at the end of our trailer. I popped my head out the rear window—"So do I." A laughing girl looked up.

"Heavens! I didn't know you were at home."



Later that evening, she and her husband came over, and we had a smoke. Even if the rawhide chairs were rather pattern-making, we enjoyed ourselves. From Western Ontario, he was a high school teacher, and his hobby was landscape gardening. He went about Quebec offering to landscape likely-looking gardens, and, having an arrangement with a big nursery garden, he got the trees and plants at a reduced rate, and a commission on sales, and so was able to do a nice landscaping job for a very moderate price.

"And that way we pay our vacation and have a fine time, and Les can plant all the trees he wants," said Les' wife. "But," she added, "the washing up goes right on, only in the trailer there's no hot running water."

"Do you eat in town at all?"

"Sometimes, not often. Here's Mr. Smith back again." A large trailer drew up further down the lot, and a man got out of the big Cadillac towing it.

"How's about some ice cream, folks?" He shouted generally towards us. Soon he and his wife, with their twelve-year-old son, had joined our party, and a huge bucket of stone-hard ice cream stood thawing on our under-tree table. It appeared Mr. Smith travelled in dairy products for a big wholesale distributing firm, and always carried a bonus of ice cream with him. He banged it with an axe, and a few chips flew off.

"See that," he said, sitting down on the grass. "Hard's-rocks—Dry ice—that's what does it. Let's go ask the Herds," and he vanished in the gloom.

It was a hot, sultry evening. Even the few stars seemed stickily limp as we sat waiting for his ice cream to melt. Presently the Herds arrived, with the dairyman Smith. Apparently these people were all old inhabitants, and knew each other.

"Say," said Mr. Herd, "who are the people up there with that darned washing always on the fence?"

"Name's Finkle, or Twinkle, or something," said Robin. "I heard him asking for mail."

"Yep, that's right." Mr. Smith banged the ice cream again; no chips flew off this time. "He's Professor of Economics at a University down South, and his wife's a child psychologist and knows all about kids." We digested this information in silence.

"Have they any children?" I asked.

"No," said Mrs. Smith, eyeing her son quietly nipping off soft bits of ice cream, "That's why—stop that, Junior—she knows all about children."

"And," added our first acquaintance, "that's why she knows so little about how to wash, I guess."

The men talked of gardening and dairying and trailers, and Robin learned more about trailing in twenty minutes than the Tourist Bureau could tell him in a month. Gaspé roads, very bad, and not possible for a trailer without brakes. South to Murray Bay—not so good—too hilly and bad grades. Must always use a safety chain, in case the automatic coupling broke. By the time the ice cream was served and eaten, we had learned a hundred and one things about trailer travel, and had finally decided it was

impossible to take the trailer much further down the North Shore below Quebec; certainly it was not possible to take it as far as we wanted to go, into the Lac St Jean upper country. All the experienced people there agreed that Quebec was not a very good trailer country as yet. Most of them were going into the States again

Suddenly, the black, velvety sky parted, letting out a breath of wind, high in the tree tops, and the cooling breeze flapped the awnings of all the trailers. As the air freshened, our party broke up and retired to sleep in the grateful coolth. The forty-four women from the "Endless Caverns" had retired to their beds at dusk, as they were starting off again at daybreak next day, the two huge marquees were dark and silent; even the cook-bus was in darkness. Soon the flood-lights at the camp entrance up the hill were switched off. Trailer Town slept under the now air-conditioned stars.

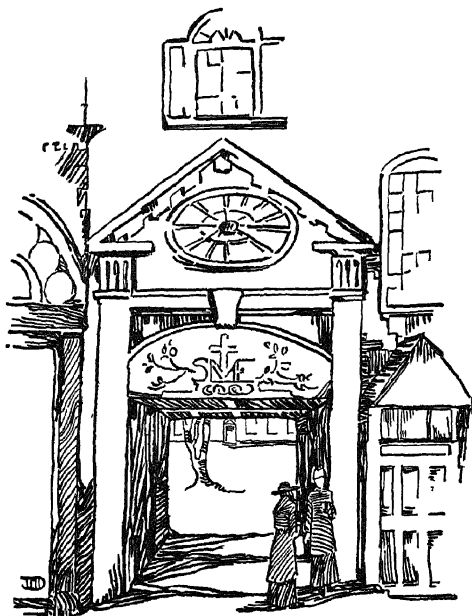


## SHADOWCLOTH—QUEBEC EVENSONG

THERE are two ways of seeing Quebec. Take an open-air street car one evening, being sure it has coloured lights to illumine the occupants (presumably that is all the illumination to be obtained), or spend every hour of every day for months trying to capture the elusive old-world charm of the city. We attempted the happy medium, but eventually had to tear ourselves away, still thirsty for more information and still delighted with the place.

Driving before sunset down the steep Côté de la Montagne, and into Lower Town, we at last found the littlest street, Sous le Cap. Shadowed, odoriferous, and crammed

with children, all scrambling onto the running board, sing-songing for sous, it had an Haroun-al-Raschid, secret air. It was very Arabian-Nightish down those narrow alleys running into the blank cliff face, and dank, even on an August evening. The unrefined laundry strung overhead flapped dispiritedly and the very



spirited garbage, in large tubs, trailed its history across the road. We moved slowly along the alley, just wide enough for a car, and, of necessity, a one-way street. To the right, a pitch-black courtyard with a couple of undersized toughs lounging against the entrance, the whites of their eyes showing strangely in the gloom, and the dirty red handkerchiefs around their throats making a splash of colour as a cigarette was lighted. Open doors gave directly on steep stairs or into low-ceilinged rooms; we saw a few drab women, and we spoke to one with magenta-coloured hair. Her answer we could not understand, and judging from the intonation, it was perhaps just as well, as we rather felt that our ancestral background was being adversely reviewed!

Then, in contrast, came an open door with lamplight streaming out, and within, a spotless, shining kitchen, and two people, a man and a woman, having supper. A red-and-white checked tablecloth, a bright geranium in a pot, thick white china, and, on the table, a long, golden yard of French bread; and the lamplight catching highlights in the woman's dusky hair.

Now the children are getting thicker, and the car resembles some sort of animated fly-paper, because someone has seen Dogdog sitting on the seat back, and every one wants a nearer view. At this moment we realize that the road ahead is blocked by a large van, and there is nothing for it but to stop. The nearest youngster on my side smiles ingratiatingly, gestures for sous, and says

"Scram, scram, scram," very quickly. Obviously a relic of tourist speech.

"Get off that running board," yells Robin.

"Don't lean on the windscreen. Keep off that window. *Allez vous en*," I cry rudely.

"Scram," replies my pal, doing nothing.

We roll up our windows Dirty paws and garlic are now less obvious.

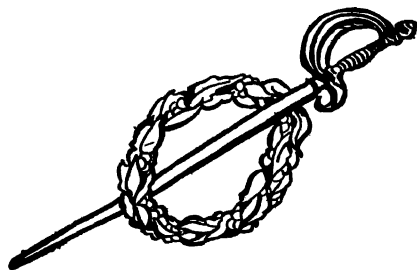


More children come running to see "*Le petit chien*" and Dogdog gets down onto the

seat and pretends to sleep, but I can see his tail shivering. We wonder when the car will collapse.

"Scram, scram, scram," shouts the linguist, jumping up and down on the running board, and all the rest follow suit We shut our eyes, preparatory to the general collapse, and open up again on a vacant car, an empty street and the "scram" merchant's heels just disappearing round a distant corner. This is Haroun-al-Raschid with a vengeance! Blinking, we look at each other, then, in the rear view mirror, we see, immediately behind the car, the largest, handsomest policeman in all Quebec. So it wasn't Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp, but Handsome and his Glittering Badge that had cleared a Thousand and One Imps out of *Sous le Cap*! The yelling, jumping rabble had sensed the law and faded away. The Handsome Policeman told us that things were "O.K. in the daytime, Ma-

dame, but of a need to be watch at night. Always we keep the patrol all nights in this place. Sous le Cap, Under the Cape in American." He beamed, basking in the knowledge of international courtesies well performed. Then the van moved and we with it, down into Sault au Matelot, and so past the tablet commemorating the famous attack by the Americans in 1775. This attack had been well planned. General Montgomery knew, as did the defending Guy Carleton, that the walls of the Quebec fortifications had been built of graft and profiteering rather than of stone and mortar. Governor Veaudreuil and Intendant Bigot, together with inefficient engineers, had taken much



more out of the fortifications than they had put in. General Montcalm, the great French patriot, knew his defences were inadequate in 1759 when the British came and took Quebec. General

Murray knew the walls were useless when he retreated within their uncertain shelter, after the defeat of the British garrison by Levis at St. Foy in 1760. Now General Carleton was facing the same situation again, and this time Quebec stood absolutely alone, the last obstacle to American annexation. Montreal, Three Rivers, Chambly, Sorel—all were in the hands of the Americans, and things looked serious for British arms in Canada.

The masonry of Quebec was rotten, but the man power was not, and the American Commander could never have believed that a handful of men, many of them peaceful citizens, untrained in war, would fight with such desperate fortitude to save their city from an invader. In Quebec, everyone knew the invaders were coming, and on November 30th orders were issued that "the suspected, and all who are unwilling to take up arms in its defence must leave the town within four days." That cleared out all the luke-warm patriots, but their cold feet made little impression on the snow outside the gates, for few people went. Instead, they joined up for training and defence work; matters of race and creed were forgotten, and French, English, Scottish, French-Canadians, Irish, Welshmen, Channel Islanders, a Newfoundlander or two, together with two hundred and thirty "Royal Immigrants," as the vanguard of the Empire Loyalists called themselves, the crews of two men-o'-war, H.M.S. *Hunter* and H.M.S. *Lizard*, the crews of several merchant ships that were in port, and one hundred and twenty-seven British regulars, stood together, resolute and unflinching, a determined little army fighting for their homes on their own soil. Possibly that may account for the amazing resistance they put up. All men will fight for their own hearth stones, while many a man thinks twice before fighting for less concrete symbols. The French and English stood together for the first time in history as united Canadians, and saw the American army arrive outside Quebec on the first of December.



Arnold, having brought his army overland by incredible marches to the St. Lawrence, appeared at Levis; Montgomery, coming victoriously from Montreal, arrived at the St. Charles River, and all was set for another epic of heroism to be played on the Quebec stage.

Montgomery tried propaganda as a means to divide the resistance of the beleaguered force. In part his manifesto read: "The General having offered in vain the most favourable terms to the Governor, and having taken every possible step to prevail on the inhabitants to desist from seconding him in his wild scheme for defence, nothing remains but to pursue vigorous measures for the speedy reduction of the only hold possessed by the Ministerial troops in the Province . . ."

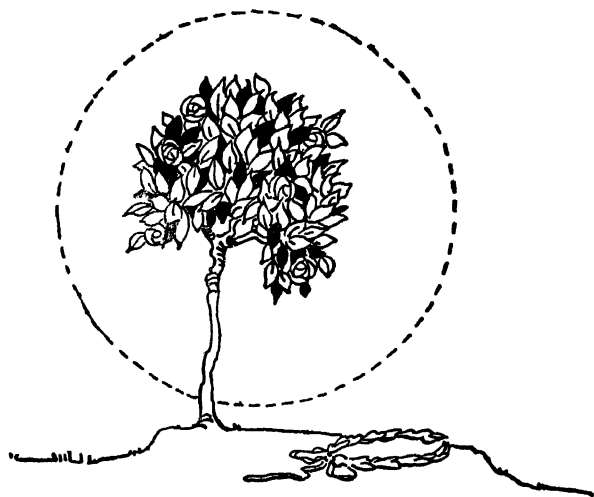
Is anything really new in the way of war? All this sounds so stunningly familiar to us in this year of grace. Only then there was no radio to spread the manifesto, and war was still more or less a gentleman's business, conducted along more or less acknowledged lines. The days of boiling oil were past, and the days of magnetic mines were mercifully in the ferocious future. And here is the part of the manifesto that showed the flaw in Montgomery's plans. He writes: "The troops . . . will advance to the attack of works incapable of being defended by the wretched garrison posted behind them.' The works were bad, as he knew from personal experience in his youth, the "garrison" very small, but the great General forgot the human element, the for-mine-own-hearth motive of the "wretched garrison." Later, he promised his soldiers

"the effects of the Governor, garrison, and of such as have been acting in misleading the inhabitants and distressing the friends of liberty." Perhaps it is not too fanciful to imagine that the last sentence annoyed General Carleton greatly, particularly when he remembered the good times he and General Montgomery had had together when they were brother officers and gay subalterns of a British Regiment in Quebec. One can perhaps imagine Guy Carleton saying "Damned if I let his 'wretched' troops have my hair brushes and new uniform, or my sword either, by gad!"

Quebec was well provisioned, and the siege began in earnest during December. To everybody's amazement the daily bombardments did very little damage, and eventually Montgomery decided to attack. By the merest chance, his plans got to the ears of Carleton, and the defenders were ready. It might well have been a different story had not a prisoner escaped from the Americans and come back to Quebec with the news of Montgomery's plans, and had the Canadian winter not taken a hand. In fact, a series of small events seemed to be-devil Montgomery; an escaped prisoner, the blizzard, things that no General could have foreseen, and these combined to save the day for Quebec.

General Montgomery died gallantly at the foot of the cliff, where he had led his men to attack an outpost of the garrison. His body was found lying among the dead of that disastrous foray, and was given full military funeral honours by the British. Possibly General Carleton remem-

bered the days when both Generals were young brother officers, and paid final tribute to a gallant gentleman, rather than to a present foe

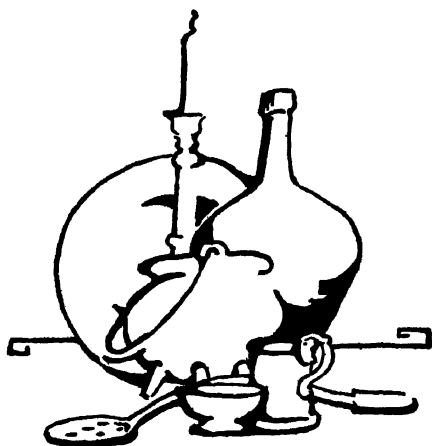


Years later, Montgomery's body was exhumed from beside the Citadel wall, transferred and reburied in a church in New York City, where his tomb now stands.

Down on St. Pierre Street, earlier in the day, I had seen the old Maison Fargue, now living again under the sympathetic renovation and reconstruction of the Daughters of the Empire. M. Fargue was a wealthy merchant, and his widow built a fine stone house down near the River beneath the cliffs. Lofty ceilings and tall windows lent dignity to the business talks that took place, for Madame still kept a keen black eye on the trading. Many cargoes of this and that were stored, along with some fine,

old wines, in the cavernous cellars. The old floor boards and panelling are in a wonderful state of preservation, and the stairway is characteristic of those sturdy times. Altogether a delightful house.

Wandering along aimlessly, we trundled into the



square where the historic Church of Notre Dame des Victoires keeps watch on the passing centuries. Most of the three hundred years of Quebec have passed across the cobbles of that dreaming square. There, in the corner to the right, is the spot where the first

three Ursuline Sisters and Madame de la Peltrie, their patroness, started to teach the Indian children during the bitter cold of the winter of 1639. The blizzards blew in the chinks of the rude hut, but were not strong enough to blow out the flame of faith. There was only mouldy, black bread on the rough log table as Mère Marie de la Incarnation said grace at mealtime, and at night the nuns and pupils lay down on the icy floor in the one long room, while the blizzard carried the powdered snow high onto the roof of the *Magazin de Roi* opposite. The night

watchman in the "King's Store" blew on his numbed fingers.

"*Nom de Dieu*, what a climate!" he muttered, starting a traditional saying that seems to gather no moss, neither does repetition stale its infinite quotation!

The walls of the Sieur de Champlain's house up the cliff caught the white drifts also, but his rose bushes, rosemary, thyme, and borragé plants were hardy enough after twenty-five years to stand the cold. Cuttings from that garden had gone all over New France in Sieur de Champlain's time, but things were rather different now. The Colonists are depressed and sorely tried; scurvy is appearing, and the Iroquois never give one a moment's peace. And besides all that, the supplies from France have not come. Starvation faces the Colony; surely *Le Bon Dieu* has forgotten us? *Mère Marie* tells us that cannot happen, and perhaps if we burn the last home-made candle in the little *Notre Dame de la Recouvrance* Church, the sweet Virgin will send an early break-up, and ships from France. So thought the infant Colony that terrible winter. But spring came, suddenly, miraculously, as it does in Quebec, bringing seed-time, and help from home. The knotted bushes put out leaves, and almost overnight, a torrent of sweet-scented musk roses bloomed in the forgotten gardens up the cliff. Perhaps some Breton sailor man, passing along to his ship, plucked a bloom, to remind him of *St. Malo* lanes, and did the Ursuline Sisters place a bowl of damask roses before the Shrine in the corner of their single room? Somewhere above the old garden, in

1608, Champlain had built his habitation, and it was to this primitive house that his girl-wife came in 1620. Imagine the slight, twenty-year-old daughter of the King's Secretary arriving at Tadoussac, miles down the River, being met with the roar of cannon and the friendly shouts of strange, red savages, coming by river boat at last to Quebec, where the few inhabitants give greeting to the Viceroy's wife, the very first First Lady of Canada.

Even the best that could be offered must have seemed crude to the young Parisienne, particularly as the habitation was in the most horrible mess, after a rubbish-strewn winter. Possibly Hélène forgot her homesickness in an orgy of spring house-cleaning, to the disgust of two lazy men-at-arms, who preferred their quarters dirty, so long as they could drink in peace. Here was a woman, oh! young, no doubt, and pretty, but what man cares if the venison scraps are thrown on the floor, anyway? And fleas in the floormat are nothing to worry anybody. *Nom Dieu*, what was she doing but throwing Ba'tist's blanket out of the window! And, *sacre de nom*, throwing herbs all over the floors after a man has spent all day yesterday gathering them for her! And half the night pounding them to powder after some recipe she brought from France—how did it go?

“While wormwood hath seed get a bundle or twain  
To save against May to make flea to refrain.  
Where chamber is swept and wormwood is strewn  
No flea for his life dare abide to be known.”

No flea, forsooth, impossible! The lazy men-at-arms spat among the newly strewn herbs.

During the four years that Hélène Champlain stayed and housekept in New France, she made herself much beloved, particularly with some of the Indians, whom she taught, and with the few other women of the Colony Hélène treated these women as equals and friends, in as far as it was possible in that day of inflated class intolerance. Madame Hébert, wife of Champlain's first settler, was certainly hostess to Madame Champlain in the first real *habitant* farm-house of the new world. What did the two women talk about? About their husbands? And undoubtedly Marie Hébert told Hélène of Champlain's adventures in Acadie, of how he persuaded Hébert to leave Port Royal and come as apothecary to the new Colony of Kebec.

"And here was good land, Madame, not of a safeness, no, but fertile, and Hébert can grow his grains, and some herbs for the healing potions, and if the Iroquois burn not the crops, we have food and drink. Madame will have a mug of wine, yes?" And Marie Hébert hurries away to fetch a jug of her best home-made native grape wine.

Certainly the two women talked of the Paris fashions. Both were Parisiennes, and even talk of Iroquois raids and privations of the rough life could not have made them forget the lovely, sordid city of King Henry of Navarre.

"And have you really seen the King, Madame?" says Marie Hébert.

"But yes, oftentimes, for my father is His Majesty's Secretary at Court, Madame; since I was so high"—Hélène

Champlain holds out a slim white hand—"I have seen the King and Queen, and all the Court." She sighs, looking out over Hébert's half-stumped acres sloping steeply down to the River cliffs.

"Have another stoop of wine?" suggests the practical Madame Hébert. The talk reverts to the settlement. The work of building the Chateau St. Louis; the cold at Mass in Notre Dame de la Recouvrance, and the need of the priest for the new stole that Madame Champlain is embroidering for him; and of Hébert's daughter, who was the first white woman ever married in the Colony, and of the other, who had died when her baby was born. "But," says her mother, "the good Father said she looked so peaceful in death that it must indeed be the will of God. Both are buried under the spruce tree, in the corner, safely away from the Iroquois raids. God rest her soul." They both cross themselves quickly. Death was always near, too near, around Quebec in 1620. But as Hélène stood up to leave, they were talking of Guillemettes' new baby. Walking down the hill to the Habitation, Madame Champlain may have wished she had a baby too; it would help keep her occupied. Who can tell?

It is all mixed up and forgotten in the warlike past of the Lower Town, but sometimes one catches an atmosphere, floating like old perfume about the narrow streets and across the square of Notre Dame des Victoires at sunset.



## NUNSVEILING—THE URSULINE NUNS

TO SAY Quebec to me now is to unloose a world, an old world, of enchantment. (Wars and rumours of wars, love, faith, sacrifice, heroism and intrigue.) The narrow streets themselves confine the outlook, both actually and figuratively, and it is easy to visualize the past—shadows stealing up from Wolfe's Cove at dawn; the sound of sword scabbards touching the cobbles in St. Louis Street;—the echo of long-forgotten vespers down Donnacona.

And down Donnacona to-day, music floats out from the Ursuline Chapel to mingle with the ghostly cadences of three hundred years. It seemed to me, sketching there under the archway of the Ursuline Convent, that the very atmosphere thickened into a tangible tapestry of history, a web of faith and a woof of action. Beginning when Mère Marie de l'Incarnation came up from the temporary Convent in the Lower Town and started the buildings on the present site, weaving through history with a continuous thread, the Sisters of St. Ursula have arrived at the scene of to-day. It was when



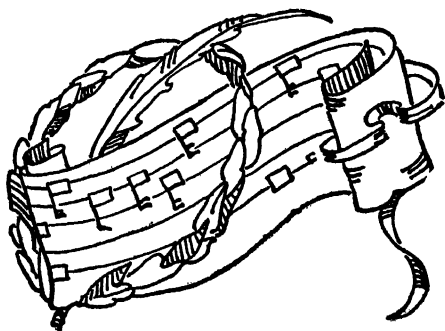
young Madame de la Peltrie threw in her lot with Jeanne Mance and rushed off to the new settlement of Montreal that Marie de l'Incarnation first showed her executive power. Madame de la Peltrie took not only her financial resources but even the furniture from the little shack which she shared with the three Sisters. By the time she returned, blocked by the Jesuits in her plans for work in Montreal, Marie de l'Incarnation was established, serenely independent financially and spiritually, in the new location. Nothing was left to the volatile Madame de la Peltrie but to build herself a house in the Ursuline grounds, acknowledge a mistress of their little world in Mère Marie, and spend the long rest of her days in prayer and general usefulness, under the stronger personality of the Superior of the Convent.

There is Madame's house, foursquare and sturdy, opposite the Chapel. Here to my left is the front door to the Convent, and to-day there is much coming and going by that door, an unusual thing in the tree-shaded courtyard. A car draws up, an old car, with country mud upon its wheels. Two women and an old, old man get out, and a farmer in his Sunday blacks. The first woman is crying. They pass through the wrought iron gate and into the cool hall, where the unseen nun behind the round grille speaks softly to inquiring visitors. Further down Donnacona, other cars stand outside the Chapel, and a sweep of song wings up through the open windows from the dim interior. A truly celestial voice, and I visualize a young

nun, inspired, singing to the glory of God in His noon-day Heaven.

Another car draws up; this time three small children tumble out, to be reprov'd by their mother, ungainly with her fourth child. The husband follows, and the family, all in sombre black, pass through the gate as the voice of the young nun within the Chapel reaches its crystal climax, "In excelsis gloria—" The young mother stops and suddenly bursts into tears.

I have been dreaming, not painting. Some time later, a voice at my shoulder startles me.



"Pardon. Say, d'you speak English?" I admit that I do.

"Say, I'm glad! I'm looking for this Museum place."

"There, right across the courtyard, but it's shut at this time."

"For Pete's sake! Why?"

"The nuns have to eat."

That reminded one of lunch-time. Apparently the stranger was a mind reader, or perhaps he knew that artists are always hungry.

"Say," says he, "hava sandwich?"

"Where from?"

"There's a hot-dog stand up there," he pointed. "I'll snatch a sandwich and a bottla Coca-Cola. Be right back," he shouted from half-way up Parlour Street.

We lunched at ease under the arch of the Ursulines, sucking Coca-Cola through straws and spilling crumbs on the historic flagstones. About now we were joined by two charming people, also looking for the Museum, also Americans, who, strangely, gave me the clue to the untoward bustle of that morning in the usually quiet back-

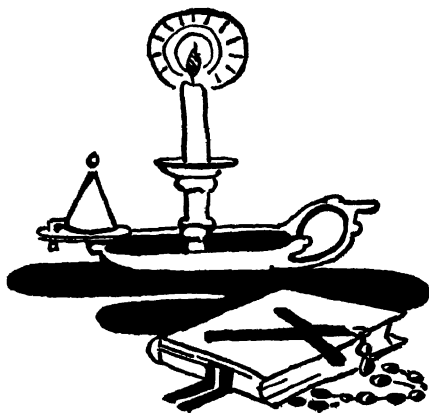
water of Donnacona.

They had come from the Chapel, having attended the special service of the Taking of the Black Veil. Unfortunately, I had not known, or I would have tried to see this impressive ceremony. An Ursuline Sister had taken her final vows;

never to leave the little cloister behind these grey walls; never to see this changing world again, to work, to teach, to pray, and, in the end, to be buried in the quiet soil of the little cemetery, all behind these grey stone walls.

I suddenly felt ashamed of those crumbs on such sacred stones and pushed them into a crack.

Noticing that the door of the Museum was open again, my American friends left in a body to see the treasures



of the collection. Of all the priceless things stored so lovingly in the Ursuline Museum, those that most intrigued me were the simple "huche" of Marie de l'Incarnation, in which the bread was made in those first bleak days of 1639, a longish wooden trough on legs, sturdy as the day it was made to bring out to Canada; and a piece of brocade, rich and soft, the stuff of the bed hangings of Mère Marie's bed—a very human commentary on the life of the great foundress of the Order. Here was a French gentlewoman, called to the religious life, a practical organizer and good psychologist, and a seer of visions; an austere nun who yet had some need of silken bed hangings. So French, so typical of those, the inconsistent centuries!

When Robin first took me to the Museum, he was welcomed with enthusiasm by the young man who acts, if wanted, as a guide, and by the senior nun in charge behind the grille. Some months previously, he had visited the Museum. Things were slack, and he spent an hour or so telling the young man the English names for some of the implements and household tools on display. His obvious interest pleased the nun, who told him many tales of the Museum treasures, and scraps of history from the past days of the Convent. Apparently his interest had stayed in the long memories of the custodian of the beloved relics, for I was allowed to actually hold in my hands certain precious books and ancient silver with the patina of time on its surface, and to feel that length of rich, old brocade—the very feel of the years in one's fingertips.

But this sketch must be finished; no more dreaming the changing light away.

Later on, a little woman, neat, rather worried about the time, came asking for the Museum. Would she have time to visit it and still get back to the cruise ship in the harbour?

"You see,—what a relief you speak English—I've asked three women, and they were all French! I particularly want to see the Wheelwright silver."

The Wheelwright relics! Interesting. Esther Wheelwright, as a child, was captured by the Abenaki Indians, taken far from her home, never to return. Somehow, possibly through their teaching of the Indians, the Sisters discovered who she was. She was educated and became a nun. Meantime her people were informed of her whereabouts and sent up from what was then far away New England a miniature of her mother and a spoon and fork of the family silver. Mother Esther of the Infant Jesus became the first Superior of the Quebec Ursulines after the British captured the city in 1759, and the miniature and silver are special relics in the Convent Museum.

The little woman still twittered at my side. She was speaking: "You see, she was my great-great-great-great-Aunt. My name is Wheelwright too."

I escorted her to the Sister in charge and left her, dazed and delighted, with the Wheelwright silver in her thin hand.

Upon my return to the neglected painting, the care-

taker pops out of a door in the archway, and her two little girls offer me candy.

"Madame, why is there so much going on to-day?" I ask, waving an idle paint brush at the cars still before the Convent gates.

"But do you not know? The taking of the Black Veil, Madame."

"Yes, but that was over some time ago. What are those cars, and where are all the family parties that went in?"

"*Mais oui*, Madame. *Tres triste*. To-day of all days." She sighed, and to my surprise, crossed herself. "Like this," she continued. "The service of the final vows, a very beautiful service, Madame, has music, singing—"

"Yes, I heard it. A beautiful voice."

"*Exactement*. You have seen also the arrival of these cars, they are people from the country, *les petites*, *le Grand-père?*"

"Yes?"

"So! They have come, her family, to the Sister who sings at the service of the final vows. But they wait until the Chapel is empty, the service over, for they come to tell her, Madame, that her mother is suddenly dead."

And this is the patchwork of a few hours in the shadow of the Ursuline Convent, and an unfinished water-colour sketch on my easel, but I count the time well lost.

\* \* \*

When Mère Marie de l'Incarnation founded the Ur-

suline Order in Quebec, she planted a hardy seed that has flourished exceedingly in the soil of New France. The Jesuits and the Recollect Fathers were established before the Ursuline Sisters ever came to Canada, but both of these Orders were in eclipse at various times during the changes of flag and Government. The Ursulines have remained in unbroken possession of the same site and in the ownership of their land day by day, year by year, for three complete centuries. The Hotel Dieu nuns, the first three of whom came out in the same ship as the three Ursulines and Madame de la Peltrie in 1639, founded the Nursing Order that still maintains and runs the huge Hotel Dieu Hospital of to-day. This Order also has continued in its appointed task through all vicissitudes. In the past, at various times, when fire, storm, shot and shell have deprived the Ursulines of shelter, the Hotel Dieu nuns have given them temporary hospitality. The healing and the teaching Sisters walk hand in hand in an unbroken line across the French-Canadian tapestry.

Figuratively speaking, their light has burned through the years, but actually speaking, the votive lamp of Madeleine de Repentigny has burned for two centuries. The story of tragic young love, renunciation of the world, and final religious vocation, stays fresh in the minds of visitors to the Ursuline Chapel. Madeleine de Repentigny was betrothed to a young man in Montreal, and she, fresh from the Convent School of the Ursulines in Quebec, was very happy. But the fiancé died, and distracted by sorrow, Madeleine threw herself into the social whirl.



Nothing calmed her spirit, so at last she asked the Sisters of her old school to let her come back as a nun. The Convent life, full of privations and austere of rule, seemed almost impossible, and Madeleine prayed desperately to the Virgin for strength to fight her worldly inclinations. And there, in the Chapel, before the Shrine of Our Lady of Great Power, Madeleine de Repentigny received her vocation to the religious life. In 1719 she took the Black Veil. In thanksgiving, she gave a votive lamp to burn perpetually, and her brother endowed it for all time. So that from that day to this, a little star of flame has flickered before the gilded St. Virge in the Ursuline Chapel. How it was possible for so tiny a flame to remain lighted through all the troublous times of September 1759 is a mystery. In those days, the great Montcalm died defending a starving city, and Wolfe, his brilliant antagonist, was mortally wounded in the same battle of the Plains of Abraham. A new flag flew over New France and a new day dawned for the great land of Canada. And the tiny flame flickered on in the badly damaged Ursuline Chapel. The walls around were shell-pocked and crumbling, the ornaments chipped, but the votive lamp was unhurt among the debris. Montcalm died, and the faithful few who could be spared from duty looked about in the desolation and disorder of the stricken city for a burial place for the dead leader. In the evening of the 14th of September, the body of Montcalm was carried down the little street to the Ursulines, and there, by the Chapel walls, was laid in a shell hole dug, ironically enough, by a

British shell. One can imagine the tragic scene, perhaps a torch held aloft, the light catching the white coil of a Sister, glinting on her rosary, as she recited the prayers for the burial of the dead. The priest, hasty in his office, for there are many dying in Quebec to-night, the glimmer of sweat on the faces of the soldiers shovelling black earth onto the rough, wooden coffin of the great General. The sad passing of Montcalm's burial procession causes a flicker and a small upshoot of flame. An old nun, rescuing oil from a chipped vessel, refills the lamp, as the priest hurries away down Donnacona, a sad, long face above a mud-spattered, blood-spattered cassock.

Later, the British, under General Murray, are in occupation of the town. Food is very scarce, and the British troops are so overcome by the plight of the inhabitants that they voluntarily give up one day's rations a week to the townspeople. These same troops have need of good food themselves, for they are doing the work of horse-teams, bringing in the winter's supply of firewood from the flame-coloured forest, harnessed to the carts. Intendant Bigot had seen to it that horses were scarce in the Colony; the wretched peasants might have used them to get away from his infamous taxes, levies and oppressions.

Among the articles of capitulation, the British had promised to protect the Convents and the Sisters, and they kept their word to the letter. General Murray made his own headquarters in the Ursuline Convent, and his table may be seen in the Museum there, where to-day the Sisters still speak of him with reverence and deep respect.

It was a cold winter, and presumably Mother Esther Wheelwright did all that was possible to make her soldier visitors comfortable; in fact, the good Sisters petitioned General Murray upon a matter that worried them exceedingly. "This matter of the Scottish soldiers, M. le General, may the Sisters not make for them some suitable—er—garments, to prevent the frost-bite upon the knees?"

Murray, a man of liberal outlook, a very courteous conqueror in a distressed city, not only respected the sanctity of the cloister and protected the good Sisters from every sort of difficulty, but he rebuilt their Chapel for them. An interesting fact in this connection was his bargain with the nuns; to repair the Chapel provided Parochial Mass and Anglican services were celebrated alternately. Force of circumstance had brought about a unique state of affairs, causing the readjustment of two great religious precepts under one roof.

St. Louis Street echoed to the tramp of British regiments and the eerie skirl of bagpipes filled the crisp autumn air—a conquering rhythm drumming on the heart of the Old Regime; a wailing cry of the new-born Canada.

The main door of the building opens and a sad little procession comes out. The children are tired, Grand-père bears heavily on the arm of his son and his face has the patient look of great age. The young mother is weeping, and she sighs as she lifts herself heavily into the car. They have told their sister, the young, singing nun, and even now she will be praying for the soul of their dead

mother. It comforts them on their way to a darkened house.

The light is gone, changed from afternoon brilliance to the long-shadowed evening, and the Angelus rings out from a dozen belfries of the city. Again Vespers are being sung in the Chapel of the Ursulines, and yet again the sound steals out to mingle with the long-forgotten echoes down Donnacona

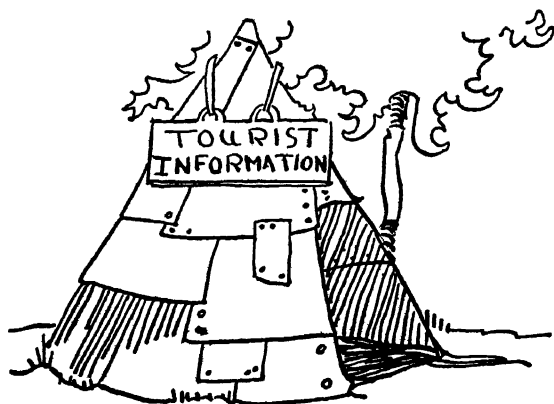


## BUCKSKIN—AN INDIAN THEME

WHEN Champlain's treaty with the Algonquins began to take effect, the main result was to force the Iroquois, their hereditary enemies, to fight even more furiously, and as the Iroquois were great fighters and the Algonquins the most peace-loving of the tribes, things became serious and very unpleasant for Champlain's Indian allies, so serious that they were almost wiped out and took refuge on the Island of Orleans, under the protection of the French. The Jesuits gave a tract of their land at L'Anse du Fort for an Indian reserve, and it was here that the remaining Algonquins and Hurons settled about the year 1651. The spot where the Hotel at St. Petronille now stands is said to approximate the Indian sanctuary. Even here the Iroquois raided the camps, creeping down past Quebec on the tide and terrifying both the few settlers and the wretched Indians. Later, the French missionaries, who had found many willing converts among the peaceful Indians, moved the reservation from the Island of Orleans to a location outside Quebec at a spot now called Indian Lorette. Here at last the remaining Algonquins and Hurons found safe camping grounds. To-day their great-great-great-grandchildren still live in the same village. In those days the Indian wigwam was the Indian's home, while to-day the only one in sight is a very smart, semi-streamlined khaki tin wigwam in

the Chief's front yard. Above the door is a notice saying "Tourist Information."

"Lo, the poor Indian," up to date!



The little Chapel at Indian Lorette is very charming. We saw it one Sunday in September, the evening light sifting through incense vapour onto the brilliantly blue Virgin at the side of the brass altar rail. The filtered sunlight picked out the inscription on a wall plaque saying simply "In fond remembrance of Little Henry," and nothing more. I wondered who Little Henry was? The heavy perfume of hundreds of vases of magenta phlox mingled with the cloying sweetness of spent incense, for the Church was decorated for some Saint's day. In the blue mist above, light caught in the prisms of the delicately beautiful crystal chandeliers, more reminiscent of the salon of some French chateau of the seventeen-hundreds than of a little Indian Mission Church in the wilds.

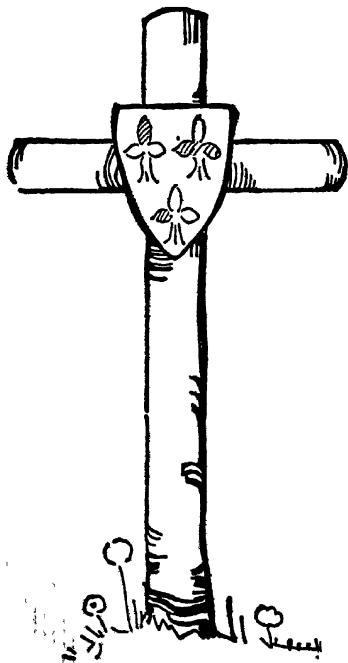
Not so remarkable, really, as it was distinctly fashionable at Court, and in the *Haute Monde* of Paris, to mingle good works with gross living, and doubtless some temporarily devout Grand Dame so bethought herself one depressing day, and atonement may have taken the shape of crystal chandeliers. Who knows?

In immediate contrast to the sophisticated beauty of the lights is the little fresco above the main altar. Charming in its naiveté, two angels support a square house of childish design, holding it up for all time over the elaborate carving of the altar itself. This device of a house was used by the Jesuits to demonstrate to their Indian flock the idea of a home. The little, square French house stood for civilization, the cherubs for Christianity, in contrast to the Huron teepee and the paganism of the tribes. The fat, puffing little cherubs holding up the house must have given the simple Indian a feeling of security in a most insecure age. To be told, and then to have a picture proving that angels guarded one's house must have been a great support to the early converts. Another instance of the thought and understanding of the primitive mind displayed by the missionary Fathers can be seen in the very fine and very valuable church ornaments, among them the vases and tall candlesticks sent out by the King of France to prove that he knew about Lorette and the Hurons.

The sound of the river rushing over the rocks below the Church repeats everlastingly the legend of the Terrible Snake of Lorette.

Long and long ago, in a fearsome pool below the Falls, there lived a Terrible Snake, who was called Oyalerowek. For how long this Terrible Monster had lived in the pool below Lorette, no one can tell, but when the first Hurons came to live by the river, while they were building the Chapel, the roarings and whistlings of Oyalerowek disturbed them, and even the braves were frightened by the Monster's continual threats. It was not as if the Hurons had not been warned, for all the Indian hunters had told the Jesuit Fathers about the Monster, whom, they said, might eat the children if a village was started on the river bank at Lorette. But the missionaries, strong in the Faith,

and, doubtless, to push home the omnipotence of their God, continued to build. And the Monster continued to whistle. And the Hurons continued to throw surreptitious peace-offerings into the river when the priest wasn't looking. So one autumn day a deputation came to the priest, saying that this Monster was really too much, and that the whistling was getting more angry every day, and that the Snake was making the river swell up and run over the edges, and pretty soon the village would be washed out. In vain the good Father said the rains of fall were the cause of the floods; no, it





was the Monster, argued the Chief. The floods would soon have passed downstream, said the priest. Not while the Monster was there whistling, said the Hurons, and stood immobile, listening to the peculiar, sibilent, whistling roar below the Falls. "Then," said the Jesuit missionary, "I will exorcise this Devil of a Snake next Sunday, so make ready." The Indians went about their preparations for the great day. All the women were shut indoors, with the frightened children, and at the time set by the priest, all the men, armed and ready, went to Mass in the Chapel. When it was over, the priest, in all his vestments, led the way down to the river, down onto the horrid black rocks where the Snake Oyalerowek was hiding. The whistling and roaring was terrific, and the rustling inside the cave became worse and worse. The priest raised his voice in long Latin prayers; louder and louder became the rustling, and then the priest, shouting even louder, summoned the Terrible Monster to come forth. Out came a long, horrid head, followed by a very snake-like body, and the Monster, completely hypnotized by the exorcising ritual, wriggled before the reciting priest, out of the cave, over the bank, and right down the village street of Lorette, followed by the terrified Indians and the hard-praying priest, who sprinkled Holy Water on the Monster's tail to make doubly sure that it would not go into reverse suddenly. At last, followed by the yells of the more-Christian-than-ever Hurons, the Terrible Monster of Lorette wriggled into the deep wood and has never been seen since, though some Indians do say it

lives at the bottom of a lake in the depths of the forest. And even now the Hurons say the marks made in the road by the passing of Oyalerowek can be seen, for the Chief forbade covering up the proof of the exodus of the legendary Snake in this Indian Eden.

The voice of the Falls sings the age-long song of the waterways, of the Indians, the forests, the first white man, and of the Monster of Indian Lorette that lived in the rushing stream beside the Indian Chapel.



If it is a true saying that all sounds ever made are still sounding about the airways, the noise above Indian Lorette must be varied in the extreme—modern radio and traditional Mass outdoing the war cries of Iroquois raiders, and the liquid water music outdoing the frenzied bel-lows of the de-devilized Monster! But all we heard was the stream, and the welcome evening breeze in tall, old trees, and, unfortunately, the squeaking tourist sign, swinging gently against the khaki tin of the only remaining Huron wigwam.

\* \* \*

On a Sunday, we went to find an old house at Charleborg, another of the villages behind Quebec. This house

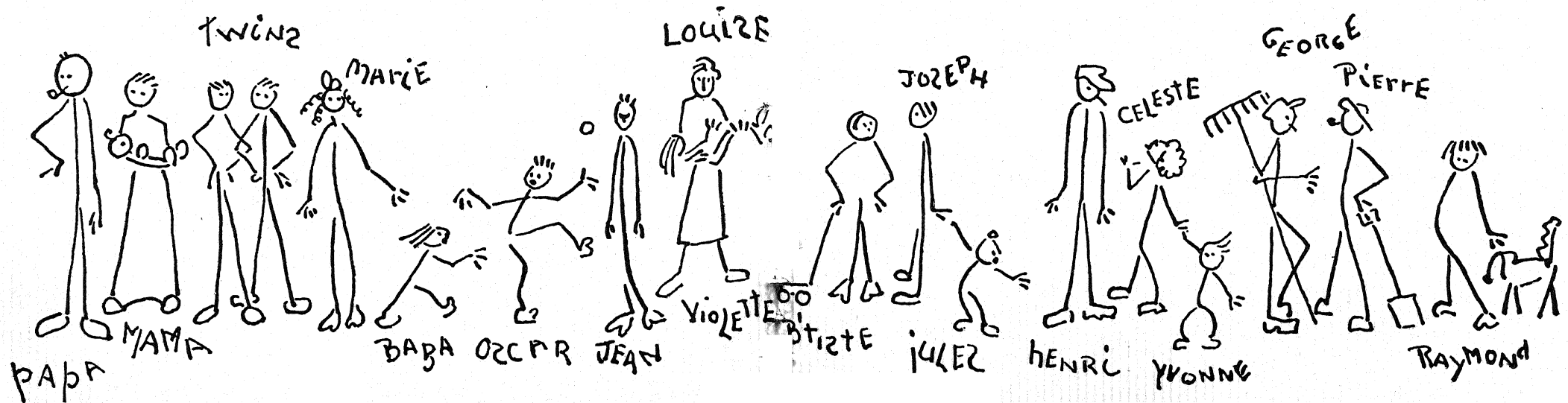
was said to be the second oldest house in Canada, said to be inhabited by an elderly, irascible female, uninterested in historical researchers or even, strangely, in tourists with money. This last phenomenon intrigued us almost as much as the old house.

It was hot and sticky, with a thunderstorm slouching along the horizon, as we drove up a one-cow-wide lane. Two women approached. Did they know such a house in which lived the old Widow Cardinal? But yes, Joseph Cardinal, truly. His house to the right down the hill. Good. We went. Mister Cardinal's house was clapboard, unpainted, with a long-suffering tin roof. We didn't feel this was the right place. Neither Frontenac, Laval, or Champlain brought out tin roofing when they came.

Again we drove, and again we inquired. But *non*, Madame did not know. She was amazingly upholstered and a loose cover of red and yellow checked gingham offset the undulating outlines of Madame to the point of dementia. She must have weighed three hundred pounds if an ounce. Formidable!

We drove on, this time in a wide circle, and accosted a vacant-looking man wheeling a pushcart containing a bubbly-nosed, small boy. The man turned out to have some English, the first we had met so far. But yes, an old house, very decrepit, owned by the Cardinals. To the right, to the left, to a turn by the store, straight ahead, around a corner—. We were in the middle of Joe Cardinal's back yard again. Undaunted, we backed out and made for the main road. By this time the heat was stifling,

and the thunderstorm belching just over the hill. The "do or die" spirit had entered our souls. Charging up to a couple of young men picking berries in a ditch, we demanded, practically at the sword's point, where was the ancient, damned house of Madame Cardinal? They beamed; but *certainement*. Two miles back, down hill, then to the right by the Church, to the left and—. Yes, Joe's tin roof again! Speechless, we backed out and sat gnawing our whiskers in silence, as the thunder rolled nearer. When we moved on later, we met an "army with banners" approaching. All the various parties we had questioned had converged by the Church, told the story of the strangers and the old house, and now, assisted by all their relatives, were bent upon giving us the latest bulletin on the historic sites situation. A veritable avalanche of French broke over us, and the net result was that no one knew anything. We thanked them all most sincerely and drove on. The thunder was nearer, but the old house wasn't.



Finally, we did find the Old House of Charlesborg and discovered that most of our information about it was entirely wrong. Also, the owner's name was Lereux, not Cardinal! The ubiquitous Joe was the only one in the district. We were thankful that he wasn't at home that Sunday afternoon, as most certainly he would have set the dogs onto us when we kept appearing to ask if he was an "*ancien maison*". After all, no man likes to be mistaken for an ancient landmark.

The house itself is charming. Its tall, pointed roof is upheld by wonderful hand-hewn beams, and its thick stone walls are as good to-day as when they were built in the sunrise of French Colonial days. There are all sorts of interesting things in that house, not the least of which is young, slim Madame Lereux, the owner. With her husband, seven daughters, four sons, two tabby kittens, and a new baby, all handsome, smiling and hospitable, she stood on the ancestral doorstep and welcomed us in. Most certainly we could see over the house; she herself

would take us. We entered the large kitchen. All these houses are amazingly spacious inside, in comparison with the exterior appearance, and the Lereux's is large for its period. Madame inherited it three years ago, with the excellent farm, from her uncle, Old Man Villeneuve. A Villeneuve has lived in that place ever since it was built, and with this generation it goes to another name, even though the family will still be of the old strain. In old Villeneuve's day things were drifting along, and doubtless the intrinsic atmosphere of the place was more apparent. Even now, the staggering cleanliness, the glittering shininess, the polish of the huge, modern stove in the huge, ancient kitchen, the glassy surface of the Congoleum rug, could not eclipse the beauty of proportion of the rooms. Nothing hid the wooden panelling of the ceilings in the lower rooms, or the massive beams in the room that was consecrated by Bishop Laval for Mass on Sunday in the latter sixteen-hundreds.

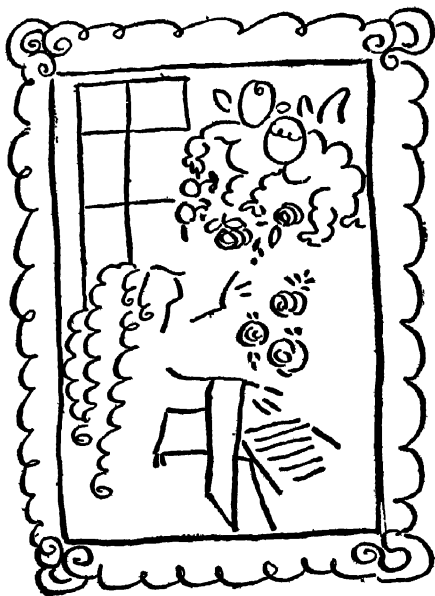
Imagine that place full of the country people in their best clothes, the women's spotless aprons and kerchiefs gleaming against the rough homespun of their dresses, possibly the Lady of the Manoir in a cherished brocade dress, old-fashioned now, that had come out from France in her



dower chest, the *habitants* in sober homespun, relieved by bright *ceinture fleches* tied jauntily around their waists, many in clogs; but the Seigneur has on his best buckled shoes and a velvet coat with silver buttons that catch the sunlight slanting in through the deep-set windows. The sonorous periods of Mass roll out over the bowed heads of the little company; the blessing rises to the panelled ceiling, and the service is over. Later, the great Bishop leaves in his coach for Quebec. A long drive, and not overly comfortable, with the recent rains making the road so bad and the river ford dangerous. The Bishop raises

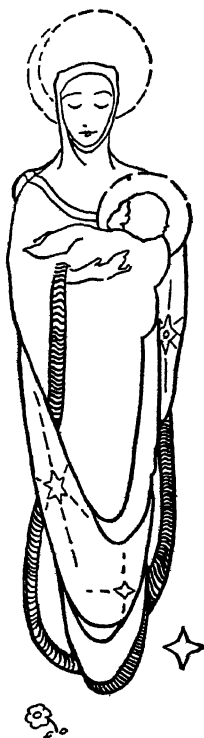
his hand in final blessing upon the kneeling country people, and his coach rumbles off down the hill.

Many times since then that room has been used for Mass, but to-day no sign of the altar table or, in fact, any of the period furniture can be seen. It was almost with awe that we discovered, between two deep windows, on an age-blackened beam, a greenish, shiny, alto-



gether *de trop* St. Cecilia and the Over-stuffed Cherubs, Number 2.

This anti-climax drove us upstairs, and there in the un-dormitory bit of the granary, we recaptured something of the shattered historical atmosphere. Because of the re-population scheme in process in the house, much of this vast granary on the upper floor has been turned into rooms, and big rooms, for the girls. The old planks, uneven and knobby still, show through the gleaming oilcloth that covers the floor, and noble beams bulge out from rose-patterned wall paper. The spaciousness is even more apparent here, and this house, a full fifty-five feet long, must have been an ambitious undertaking in its day. Here in the loft, pushed to one side, stands a massive, a unique early Canadian *armoire*. My greedy eyes whooped over the noble cupboard-chest, and I noticed Robin gravitating gradually towards that side of the loft. Soon we were looking inside. We do not know for certain, but we think it must be almost a museum piece, and we wonder why no one had bought it. Wondering if perhaps we could, our fingers itched and our faces took on that semi-moron blankness that we fondly imagine deceives the owners of antiques we want to acquire. This



time even Robin's wide-eyed innocence was wasted. That once-in-a-lifetime piece of furniture must have been built into the house, because no window, door or stairway will let it out. To-day, with some old chests, the spare harness, tools, blankets and miscellaneous junk, stands that almost vocal relic of the Ancient House of Charlesborg Parish.

We had become so excited by the *armoire* that we went and had another look at St. Cecilia, and that steadied us greatly! We chatted with Madame and a selection of the family, and saw the June 1939 model addition to the family, a fine baby, blue-eyed, cheerful, handsome, like all the rest of that large household.

In a special niche in the thick walls of the kitchen stood a little Virgin, with a candle flickering before Her. We put the two roses from our buttonholes into the case in the niche, and it pleased Madame very much, as she had previously found out that we were not of the Faith. It seemed a small payment for all the kindness and hospitality we received under that tall, old roof; the simplicity with which we were welcomed and shown everything in the house, even the girls' dresses hung in a huge maple wardrobe, and the fresh butter stored in the cool of a vault-like cupboard in the thickness of the north wall.

At last we had to leave, showered with invitations to come back again. Thanking the Lereux family for a charming hour, we avoided three kittens, two small boys, four small girls, a reaping machine, a larger daughter, and finally drove on to the road, no longer regretting the trouble in finding the place, and marvelling all the way

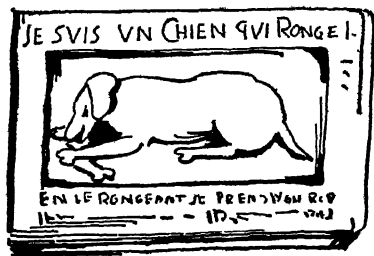


home at the truly impressive family of the vivacious Madame Lereux.

Someone said the house should be a museum, but we opined that it is much happier, and certainly more useful, in its present capacity as a home for the newest of the many generations it has sheltered beneath its steep black roof.

There is a model of this house in the Museum in Quebec City, along with many interesting relics and other models of historic buildings and places, and invaluable documents of early times.

Charlesborg has another historic spot, but this one is more sinister in theme, and bears the historical blight of having belonged to Intendant Bigot, the last and worst of the French Viceroys. We had great difficulty in finding it also, but after wandering for the greater part of another afternoon, we finally found the clearing down a forest trail.



Chateau Bigot was a well-known but ill-liked name at the time of the Intendant's glory. It has always retained a sinister flavour, possibly due in part to the incidents described, with more picturesque than truth in Kirby's novel, *The Golden Dog*. Therefore, it is rather a come-down to

find this highly notorious chateau is now only an excavation lined with stonework. A mass of blackberry, bracken and tall Michaelmas daisies cover both the actual ruins and the alleged villainies in a tangle of wild growth, and the past is overgrown with brambles.

"Troy town is covered up in weeds," and so is the Chateau Bigot at Charlesborg Royal.

When François Bigot came out to New France as the thirteenth Intendant, no one thought that he would also be the last, but so it was, and in no small measure was Bigot himself responsible for the loss of Canada.

Arriving in Quebec, he promptly set himself up in such state as rivalled the Court of Louis Fifteenth in Paris, using the tax monies of the Colony for the upkeep of his "Palace" and his "Hunting Chateau," his coaches, entertainments, and numerous servants, not to mention his mistresses. Such was the power that he wielded that no one, least of all the effete Governor Vaudreuil, dared to put a stop to the iniquitous career of this ex-favourite of the French Court. It is possible that Bigot took his ideas from the boudoir of Madame de Pompadour, by whose favour he had been appointed Intendant of New France. His extravagances and dishonesties welded the last span into the bridge that carried Canada from the white flag of France across to the Union Jack. This was the man officially. In person, he was handsome, be-wigged, scented and dressed in the Versailles mode; gallant, subtle, a courtier with the ladies when it suited him (which was mostly, particularly if the lady was beautiful and

young!), and as crooked as a snake's trail in every relationship of his career.

The Chateau Bigot, sometimes called Beaumanoir, was notorious for its parties of all sorts, but the tale of the Algonquin Maid is connected with a certain hunting party. Bigot, returning from the hunt, saw, half hidden in the brushwood, a charming Indian girl. She was a beauty, he saw at once, rather pale of skin and of slender, graceful build. Immediately the Intendant discovered himself to be lost in the vast woods, and asked the Indian Maid if she would guide him back to the Chateau. In all sincerity, she consented, gliding before him through the forest trails, until the gardens of the Estate were reached.



Here she parted from Bigot, but not for long. He immediately sent out game-keepers to capture the girl, as she returned to her home in the forest. From that day no more was heard of the Algonquin Maid. It is said that she was a lonely captive in a secret tower room facing the forest that she would never roam

again, and that her mother came to the edge of the forest calling her daughter's name in vain. The Algonquin Maid had passed from the living world into an imperishable legend. The tale says that the Intendant's mistress in Quebec finally heard of the savage beauty at Charles-borg and, mad with jealousy, rode out alone, across the ferry of the St. Charles, and through the lonely forest to

the Chateau. Finding the secret entrance to the tower room, she murdered the helpless girl, leaving her bleeding body on the floor of the apartment, where Bigot himself found it. Alarmed, but apparently not unduly distracted, he is said to have secretly buried his captive in the cellar, and by one of those illogical turns of character so prevalent at that time, felt called upon to put a stone above the grave. Until the middle of the last century that stone was in the foundations of Chateau Bigot, a mute reminder of the tragedy of the Algonquin Maid.

It is strange how legends vary so little in theme. This business of a secret tower and the murdered mistress of the Canadian Chateau is extraordinarily like a folk-song of an earlier period, about a Royal counterpart of Bigot. The King was greatly taken with the wife of one of his nobles, and remarks, rather bluntly,

“Marquis, thou art three times happy,  
Holding one like her in fee  
If thou wish to do me honour  
I a secret friend would be.”

The husband replies,

“Sire, you a mighty monarch,  
Hold the power of life and death——”

but

“Were you not my king and liege lord  
This would be your dying breath”

Hooray! A good effort, but evidently it did not work, for the next words tell of the lady pining in a secret tower, and nobody was at all pleased, except the King, who was

obviously a man of little finesse. Then comes the jealousy and murder theme.

“The Queen then sent the Lady roses”

and the unhappy Lady, in spite of the example of all contemporary legend, which should have warned her,

“—— pressed them to her bosom

She breathed the perfume, — and she died.”

More dirty work in a tower!

Legend or no legend, Bigot continued to flourish, and his carousals continued in the long rooms above the bones of the Indian girl, and a succession of other women played hostess at the entertainments. But one woman seems to have held the dangerous, changeable swain. She was the wife of a small Seigneur, evidently a man of few morals and great cupidity, for his business transactions with the Intendant included the hi-jacking of all the grain of the starving settlers, the storing of it in the barns of his river seigniory, and the re-selling to the Quebecers at a thumping profit. The Seigneur's Lady evidently saw advancement in the business also, and she repaid some of her ill-gotten gains later, when she lent Bigot money for his ransom from the prisons of France, where he was thrown, most justly but too tardily, after his return to Paris.

Or so the story goes, for I must admit that much of this grisly detail is hearsay, and legend has build a fascinating tradition on the ruins of Chateau Bigot. Even the name has got mixed up. It is really Chateau Bigon, and was built by a most respectable, much married, earlier

Governor, years before François Bigot came to Quebec. At different periods in history, the land has belonged to the great Monsignor Laval, who founded the Quebec Seminary, to Talon, the greatest of all the Intendants, and to-day it is owned by the Sisters of Charity.

It has always retained its sinister flavour, and it is definitely an anti-climax to find this blood-stained Chateau is now but a long, deep hole, lined with rubble, uneven mounds about the sides the only indication of high walls and secret towers. And in the surrounding spacious clearing, where once lay the lavish gardens and pleasures of Bigot's day, the Sisters of Charity now grow golden, waving wheat, and along the ruins of the old Chateau, rows of potatoes give promise of food for the poor; the poor and starving of to-day fed from the simple abundance of land that once belonged to their greatest oppressor—the vice-stained stones of a dark yesterday lying in ruins among the potatoes of Charity.

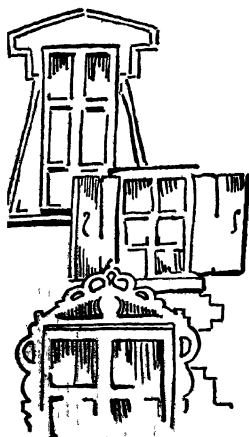
We had found some remains, and Dogdog had found some other ancient remains and rolled in them. After that we went hastily home.

## WOOL—THE SHRINE OF GOOD SAINTE ANNE

WE SWUNG out of Quebec City, the car feeling light and free without its trailer, and into the Carpet Country. This is really no exaggeration, as almost every cottage, tree, fence and clothes-line has a hundred hooked mats tied on to it, waving in the wind, tacked on to the actual house or hung on the railings. Sometimes two or three neighbours have a continuous collection of lines hung with lovely homespun blankets and handwoven coverlets, making an unforgettable picture with the old houses, shadowy green trees, and the riot of coloured carpets against a background of shimmering River. Interspersed among the handiwork are strange notices saying "For soul," "*Tapis ici*" and "Carpets from 10 cents." I always wanted to buy a "carpet" for ten cents, but never got round to it, somehow. Incidentally, should you wish to buy rugs, blankets, and especially the coverlets, it is well to do so here, on the roadside, as we notice the prices in the towns are definitely different.

Beside the road, the farm women have little stalls displaying butter, eggs, jams, cheese and bulgy, golden loaves of home-made bread. We always tried to run down the Beaurpré Road if we needed fresh bread and sweet butter.

"*Bon jour*, Madame, have you any



bread?" The phrase seems rather unnecessary, as there are at least twenty large loaves on the stall, but Madame gets the idea and smiles broadly.

"*Mais oui, certainement. Voilà.*" She hands us a colossal six-pound moccasin loaf.

"*Non, non*" We wave our hands frantically, and point dumbly to a smaller size. Madame is concerned. But what about the children? A loaf so small will not feed the numerous children we surely have? Ah, *c'est-ça*, we are on holiday. Yes? And but Monsieur and Madame alone, then *vraiment*, a small loaf will be of a sufficiency, and some butter, and some cheese and some —. We break in on the recitation, take our loaf, wrapped in last week's *Action Catholic*, and drive on.

The next stall we stop at is in charge of a worried small girl with a crying baby clasped to her skinny little chest.

"*Alors, petite*, cheer up and sell me some apples." She looks even more worried.

"Come, come, cheer up." Robin makes ingratiating noises. The baby yells. I say, helpfully—not that I want it—"Give me the little darling." The girl gives us one terrified look, grasps the baby in a-death-do-us-part-grip and bolts up the steep path out of sight.

"The whole transaction is a wash-out," says Robin, getting out.

"What are you doing?"

"Buying apples," says he, slipping a quarter under a grubby bit of knitting obviously belonging to the girl-



child. We ate the apples as we drove along. Crisp and sweet they were, with a tang that one never gets in a shop apple.

"Poor brat, I suppose she thought we were going to kidnap the squeaking horror," mused Robin.

"Undoubtedly; it's the light of her life, probably, and she can't be more than eight herself. Wonder why she's so thin among all the good butter and farm stuff?"

"Worrying about the baby," said Robin. And that must have been it, for the whole countryside literally flows with milk and honey and "the fruits of the earth".

There was a sound of singing as we passed a cottage, and we stopped in the ditch to listen.

"A la claire fontaine  
M'en allant promener,  
J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle  
Que je m'y suis baigné.  
Il y a longtemps que je t'aime,  
Jamais je ne t'oublierai."

A clatter of tin pans, and the singer repeated the refrain—

"Il y a longtemps que je t'aime,  
Jamais je ne t'oublierai"

Another tinny bang that sounded like a batch of baking being turned out on a table. The farmer's wife, at her work, was singing the age-old songs in the traditional way.

"J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle"

she continued the story of the young man whose lady love asked him, quite reasonably, for a bunch of roses off a bush beside "the clear fountain".

"And I did say her nay;

\* \* \*

"I wish the cruel roses  
In the dark ocean lay  
That I and my dear sweetheart  
Might live in love for aye."

because the lady, very properly, walked out on her ungallant swain.

"A la Clair Fontaine" (At the Clear Fountain) was an old song when the first French soldier put foot on North American soil, and to-day it is still sung as one of the most popular folk-songs of Quebec. As we started on again, the cheerful housewife sang lustily above the swish of water and the clatter of the kitchen. Her baking must have turned out successfully for her rendition of "Alouette" (The Lark) crescendoed after us, towards Ste Anne de Beaupré.

There is a Calvary set in deep shadow, with the foot of the wooden cross planted in a riot of brilliant flowers. Trees form a natural screen, and behind the leafy tracery rises a blue Laurentian hillside. This Shrine is on the roadside on the way to Ste. Anne de Beaupré, facing upon the River. The first time we saw it, the last rays of the setting sun laid a golden carpet across the shallows of the River, and reflected back upon the painted Christus on the Cross. Someone had placed geraniums in a varied assortment of pots about the stonework of the enclosing walls, while masses of brilliant magenta phlox and wild goldenrod rioted in glorious confusion everywhere. Some devout farm wife had lent her much-prized rubber plant,

and in a lard pail a tight little bunch of roses, cosmos and zinnias added their simple story to the tale of care and piety, as told by the carefully tended Calvary on the Beauré Road

All along the road stand old houses, and some delightful barns; the cow-stall doors, open-slatted, and with a



type of hinge that we had never seen before, particularly interested us. Doors of that type, gates almost, would be very attractive in a cottage, between the living-room and dining-room, for instance, and in a studio, gates with open-work tops would be perfect to cover up the canvas cupboard, or the kitchenette. It was only with great difficulty that we refrained from waiting for darkness so that we could remove a particularly nice door with turned slats.

Still coveting these things, we came at last to the outskirts of Ste. Anne de Beauré. Much,

and much more, has been said and written about this continent-famous Shrine, and exactly what one expects to find is difficult to say, but certainly it is not what one first encounters in the village, before the magnificent Basilica is reached. Our first impression was of a town

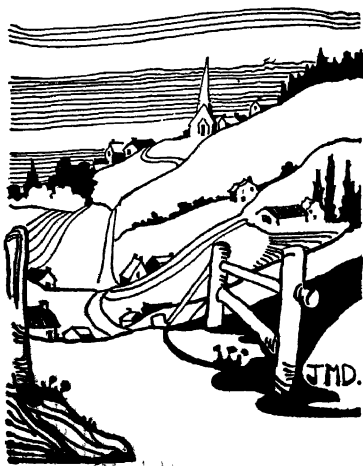
composed entirely of notices—notice of all sorts and sizes and colours, in English and French, mainly adjuring the tourist to Eat, Sleep, See, Stay, Buy and Pay, To Slow, To Park, Not to Park, To Enter here and Exit there, To Inquire, To Visit, and finally, even if one had the ambition left to do so, Not To Spit. Even before seeing the inspiring Basilica, we regretted this rank commercialism in the environs of so sacred a spot, but after going around the Church, we were disgusted at the bathos. Here is tourist commercialism at its most strident as a setting for religious imagination in stone. For the Basilica is a magnificent conception.

Very vast, and as yet rather bare, the proportions of the building can be fully appreciated even in their undecorated state. Two things stand out in my mind about the Church of Ste. Anne de Beaupré, the sense of enormous, far-reaching space, and the hundreds of pots of a certain delicate, blue, bell-shaped flower that decorated almost every side chapel,



shrine and niche, giving the impression, at a distance, of a misty nimbus about each Saint. The Miraculous Statue of Ste Anne, surrounded by thousands of crutches and offerings, attracts most of the faithful, who kneel all around the wide circular base of the column, to ask that their separate needs be granted in the name of the Mother of the Virgin. And there is a *Sacré Relique* in the Chapel behind the Statue, the true bone of the wrist of Ste Anne, presented by the great Bishop Laval himself in 1670. In one of the three disastrous fires that have destroyed the various Churches of Ste Anne de Beaupré, this wonderful relic was nearly lost, but just as the heat blackened its whiteness, a rescuer was sent, and the treasure was torn from the flames. But the Miraculous Statue stood through all the roaring devastation of three fires, serene and beautiful and unharmed, as it stands to-day, looking down on the kneeling multitude in the new Basilica.

Across the wide roadway, thick with cars and slow-moving crowds of people, stands all that is left of the simple old Chapel of Ste Anne. Ascending the wooden steps well above the road level, I turned to the River and saw, between buildings, the reddish-brown sail of a typical river barge. Thus came the first pilgrims to Beaupré, storm-tossed sailors out of Brittany, who, in the midst of a violent storm, vowed to build a shrine at the first



place they landed, if the wind would abate and blow them safely ashore. The wind brought them ashore on the flats below a cape of the St. Lawrence. True to their vow, the sailors built a tiny Chapel on the shore, and named it for the patron Saint of Sailors, Ste. Anne, and for many years it was known as "*Chapelle des Matelots*", the Sailors' Chapel. This was early in the life of Quebec, about 1658, but that first building was in a poor place, and the high tides necessitated rebuilding higher up the shore. By August of 1666 the second Chapel was finished, and the Governor, D'Aileboust, famous for his handling of the Indians, laid the foundation stone. But it was in the laying of the foundations of the first Sailors' Chapel that the first miracle of healing occurred. A *habitant* of Beaupré called Guimont was seething with chronic rheumatism which almost crippled him at times. As he bent, laying the third of the foundation stones, the pain was very bad. Muttering a prayer to Ste. Anne, he stood up, endeavouring to relieve the cramp. But the first miracle had happened. As he straightened, all pain left his rheumatic body, he could stand upright, no longer a cripple, and he jumped for joy. After that, miracles beyond number took place, and to-day the Shrine of Ste. Anne, the Sailors' Saint, at Beaupré, is the most famous of pilgrimage churches on the North American Continent.

The small Chapel above the road is all that remains of the old stones and timbers, for when the large Church was decided upon, the stones of the little *Chapelle* were carefully reassembled and rebuilt into a semblance of the

old Sailors' Chapel, on a spot in the shadow of the hill. The actual place where stood the original tiny building is now covered by the teeming roadway, and one's car is parked upon ground hallowed by the simple prayers of sailor men, who, delivered from the perils of wind and wave, came to safe harbour in the shallow waters of Ste Anne de Beaupré Bay, in the non-commercial days of the past.

The bronzes up the hillside are very fine, and the candlelight procession held once a year is a wonderful sight. At that time, pilgrims in their thousands follow the priests from Station to Station of the Cross, the flickering of a myriad candles in the hands of the faithful gleaming dully on the bronze figures representing the Way of the Cross, until the Calvary is reached in the shadows of the trees high above the silent River, high above the great white Church, above the world, and perhaps nearer to the sublime under the wide starlit heavens than under the towers of man-made masonry. Who can tell?

It may be incorrect, but to me it had always been Ste. Anne de Beaupré that the Irish poet, Moore, meant when he wrote the famous "Canadian Boat Song" during a holiday in Canada. As the poet was coming down by canoe from Ottawa, the *voyageurs* singing the songs of the French-Canadian boatmen, one traditional paddling refrain caught his fancy, with its lilting cadences. And, as he himself said, he "adapted English words" to the traditional tune, the result being the renowned

"Row, brothers, row, the stream runs fast  
The rapids are near, and the daylight's past."

It is the verse that deals with the evening prayer that always seemed to mean Ste Anne de Beaupré, but actually it is more than likely that Moore was referring to Ste. Anne de Bellevue, near Montreal. The canoe was being borne along "On Ottawa's tide," and to get down below Quebec in time for evening prayer seems rather too much to expect, even from the most speed-conscious *voyageur* that ever lived!

"Faintly as tolls the evening chime  
Our voices keep tune and our oars keep time,  
Soon as the woods on shore look dim  
We'll sing at St. Ann's our evening hymn.  
Row, brothers, row, the stream runs fast  
The rapids are near and the daylight's past."

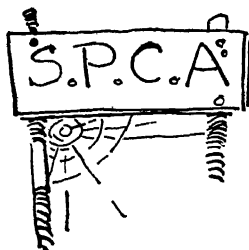
Wherever the locale may have been, this boat song conjures up the great River, silvery in the fading light, the steady rhythm of paddles, and the vesper bell calling from the belfry of some sharp-spined little church at the water's edge.

We decided on a sandwich, and elected to stand at a snack bar, covered with the ubiquitous notices, keeping an eye on Dogdog in the car. As usual, an admiring crowd of children had gathered round, shouting to each other about the "*beau petit chien*."

Throughout the whole trip Dogdog had attracted much attention, mainly by his smallness. Most of the country people have dogs, but they are the big, husky animals for pulling sleighs in the winter and the dog carts



in the summertime. All along the roadside nearing Quebec importunate children dance about the roadside, yelling and brandishing soiled snapshots, while beside them, huge stately dogs, hitched to little buggies, lie in dignified immobility. We became completely pig-headed about these Ten-cents-Take-a-Snapshot merchants. Even though trade flourished and many tourists were photographing members of their parties sitting in the dog carts, we steered a steady course past the dozens of outfits lined up along the road. Somehow, a dirty green top hat and a pair of sunglasses tied on the head of a big, patient dog failed to impair his aloofness, and failed to amuse us



much, so there is no picture of the typical dog-drawn cart in this patchwork book. Even Dogdog looked pained at the indignity of the sight, and usually he has no sympathy with large-sized dogs!

Seriously, this business of the dogs along the Beaupré Road is a disgrace to Quebec. It may amuse some of the more unthinking travellers to have pictures of themselves taken sitting top-heavily in the little buggies harnessed to heat-dazed huskies panting for water. It may be that revenue from this ridiculous diversion accrues to the Church and State in such volume as to make it worth the while of those Institutions to overlook the absolute cruelty to animals displayed on their highroads. However that may be, the spectacle of heavily furred, working dogs lying in

the dust, obviously suffering from thirst and intense heat as the sun beats down on their unsheltered bodies, sore eyes watering and tongues hanging dry and cracked from their panting mouths, is no good advertisement for the province. Children sucking ice cream cones sit, lightly clad, under umbrellas or tents and in the shade of trees, while the dogs suffer tortures in the full sun along the paved road-edge. (It was ninety-six degrees the last time we were down at Ste. Anne's.) Surely this obvious display of cruelty to helpless animals can be stopped. Even if the humanitarian aspect is of no account in the proper quarters, the adverse criticism of the greater number of visitors must carry some weight. No tourist returns to see again a spectacle that has disgusted him and wrenched his vacationing heart with pity. The Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is working steadily for the more humane treatment of the dogs but, unfortunately, appears to be meeting with less co-operation than might be expected. A working dog seems happy, as a rule, and in good condition, when one sees him pulling a sleigh in winter, or mushing in a long team of huskies, or drawing a cart full of milkpails through some Laurentian village; but these same dogs lying in full summer sun on a paved roadway, doing nothing but suffer, are a pathetic sight for compassionate eyes.

Eating a colossal skyscraper of a sandwich, we chatted to the girl behind the counter, asking about the great white Basilica across the road. Last Sunday, a Saint's Day, she told us, twenty thousand people had come as pilgrims

to the Shrine, crowding into the vast interior, standing on the steps at the base of the two soaring towers, filling all the hundreds of benches facing the main doors with their carved arches, even kneeling along the roadside above the Church.

"Such a day, Madame, the very River was full of people in boats. There were special excursions, even from the States, and busses and trains, all full. And sometimes there are ambulances, see you, and the daughter of my sister-in-law's aunt made a pilgrimage for her appendicitis. Three days she made her pilgrimage, and, *tiens!* no longer had she any pain. It was cured."

"What a mercy. Was she very pleased?"

"*Mon Dieu*, she was pleased, Madame, and she vowed to pray, every day, in her village Church, for a thank-offering."

"She is a very devout woman, and must be happy to be so well."

"Oh, she is dead," said the girl unconcernedly. "*Mon Dieu*, she ate too many tomatoes and die of the pain in the belly." She paused, but not for long. "And now my sister-in-law has to keep the three children with her own ten. Do you think, Madame, that thirteen is not the lucky number?"

I thought it definitely not a lucky number, but the girl, babbling on, had other ideas.

"My sister-in-law is always the lucky. First she get my brother, Marie Joseph Alphonse and five cows, and

now thirteen children instead of only ten," she sighed enviously.

We offered no comment.

Another day we again stood at a food counter drinking coffee and talking, this time about the Church building, rapidly nearing completion, or so we thought. The girl behind this counter, a very pretty brunette, said no, indeed the Church had much work yet to be done. Her father was the sculptor on the tower there, and he had two or three years more work for himself alone. Yes, he had made those angels on the towers, very beautiful, are they not, Monsieur? Very fine indeed, we thought, and distinctly modern in design. Did the father also do the designing? But no, Monsieur, the design was given by the great architect of the Church, and father cut the stones.

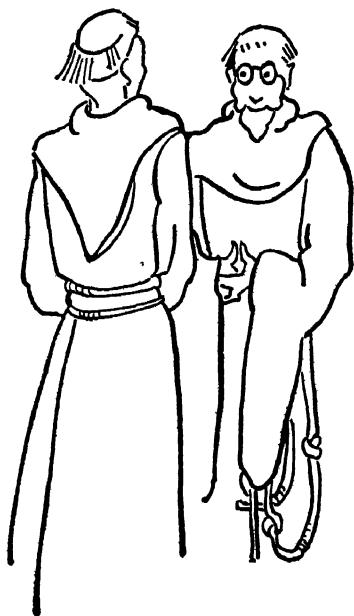
We had been wondering if here was a natural-born sculptor who could conceive the idea for the angels on the tower. The "sculptor" in this case is really a skilled stonemason, whose work is so good that he has even been taken up to Ottawa to do some of the stonework on the Peace Tower of the Parliament Buildings.

"Those little very fine birds, Madame, with the many flowers about the archway, and some of the so-beautiful carving in the Chapel of Remembrance, are of my father," said the girl proudly.

She might well be proud of a father who is so skilled an artisan in a difficult craft. May his work live as long as the work of the great craftsmen of the near-by St. Joa-

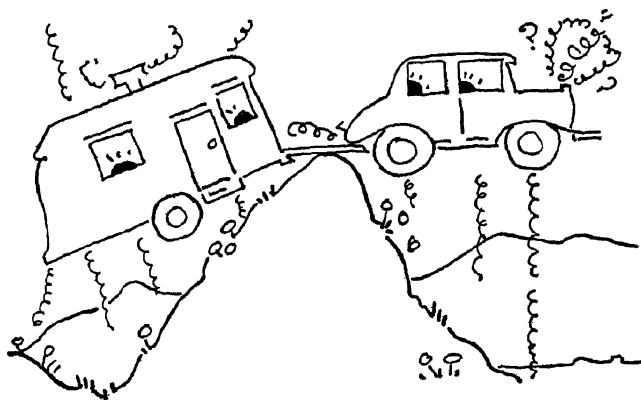
chim School, of the brothers Lavasseur, of Venzina and Pacquet in the early days, and in more modern times, Baillairge and Jobin, to prove that master-craftsmen are still working in Quebec.

Having pushed our way through the crowd surrounding Dogdog, we got into the car and drove off amid the plaudits of the dog fanciers. Leaving Ste. Anne de Beaupré behind caused us no pang, as even many visits failed to impress us with the veneration and delight we feel in other parts of the province, and particularly in Quebec City itself.



## HOMESPUN—THREADS OF HOMESPUN

WE HAD been told of the St. Joachim hill. They said it was very steep, terrifically long, appallingly winding and generally astounding. It is. In spite of all these things, it is not a hair-raising hill, because the road is wide and the surface good, hard-holding gravel. We navigated worse hills before our journey ended, the one at Baie St. Paul, and the one out of Mal Baie (Murray Bay) seemed worse in some ways, and one about ten miles



up from St. Catherine's Bay was tricky and had loose gravel to make it more fun. All these are bad, and certainly impossible for a trailer without brakes. Possibly with all modern gadgets in the way of brakes, chains and what not, it might be possible to survive, provided the trailer didn't jack-knife up on you and push the whole

outfit over the edge! That stretch of road is not trailer country as yet, in spite of incredibly optimistic Tourist Bureaus. It is hard driving, though amply repaying the effort in glorious views and quaint French-Canadian rural scenes—in fact, the Canadian Artists Christmas Card series to the life. The road all along the way is narrow, though there is always room to pass, should one meet a car or hay wagon. These overlap in the well-known hay wagon way, leaving odd wisps of grass on the side of the car. The carters look down from their sweet-smelling perch, spit expertly over the side, and jog on down the steep hill into the village. Marie Joseph Pierre, the carter, has his barn there. It is a good barn; last year Pierre painted it yellow with a fine green roof, while his wife and the six older children painted the house. Unfortunately, the yellow paint ran out when they had only done the front of the house, but there was plenty of green left, so they finished the other three sides and the roof with that. A good, sound job, and very smart.

I liked the grey mist creeping up the hillsides in wispy fingers, and I liked the tang of the sea fog in my nostrils. In places, we were high above the fog, looking down on a strangely distorted world, and at times we were submerged in the clinging wetness, but wherever we were, the good sea smell drifted off the River and brought the old sea-excitement. Possibly only the coast-born can know that intense, thrilling vibration, like the plucking of one's very heart strings, that comes with the smell of the sea. After an absence of many months, it went to our heads,

## H O M E S P U N

and we burst into sea chanties, roaring through surprise villages and shivering our timbers in quiet hamlets—

“Where have you been all the day, Billy boy, Billy boy,  
Where have you been all the day, my Billy boy?”

we inquired of a venerable man in La Miche. He didn’t seem to know. We tried another—

“Tommy’s gone and I’ll go too  
Away down Hilo.  
Oh, Tommy’s gone and I’ll go too,  
Tom’s gone to Hilo.”

Judging by the expression on the face of a woman pumping water, she thought the sooner we joined Tommy the better.



“A sailor’s wife a sailor’s star should be”  
yelled Robin, whooping the car down a hill—

“Yo ho! me lads, yo ho!” said he,  
“A sailor’s wife a sailor’s star should be.  
The sailor’s wife his star ——”

he took a deep breath

“His —— STAR —— should —— BEEE”

We had now reached undreamed of heights both of voice and altitude, so stopped and looked about.

Baie St. Paul lay below, shrouded in mist, its mar-



spires pricking through veils of grey vapour. Rather ghostly, it looked like something in a cocoon, almost ready to emerge. We could hear the sound of faint bells coming up to us, and on the almost invisible River, a liner sounded off. The hills returned the call, eerily, all round us. The strange unreality of fog made everyday things fantastic, and we began talking of the legend of the Ville d'Ys. It was an ancient town on the coast of Brittany, so wicked that the Good God engulfed and sank it whole. To this day, the sailors say, you can hear the church bells

ringing in the city under the sea,  
Ding, dong, like the bells down in  
Baie St. Paul this misty morning.

Beyond the town the road divides, and one has the choice of the inner road via St. Hilarion, or the outer via Les Eboulements and the River, both converging at Mal Baie, or as it is generally called now, Murray Bay. We took the inner road into the hills.



Fireweed and yarrow and white everlasting,  
Goldenrod, michaelmas, and hart's tongue fern  
Growing in the ditches by the winding wayside  
Over hill and round hill to St. Hilarion.

Almost immediately the Laurentians closed about one. Somehow, the amazing, unimaginably blue mountains seem to form a backdrop for so much of the scenery all

about Quebec that it is almost a shock to find that they are real, not just painted.

Rolling hills on both sides and roller-coasting road before us, up and down which one pants or hurtles according to the uppishness or downishness of the immediate landscape. To our joy, we found an old woman putting round loaves into an open-air oven. The oven stood at the very roadside, the two doors open, showing a gaping mouth with rows of red ashes like teeth on both sides, a clear space in the middle for the loaves. The old lady was assisted by her daughter, and as we watched, some fifteen round pans were placed by the younger woman on the edge of the stone oven floor; Mamma, using a long wooden pusher, expertly pushed them far back in the hot stone vault and *voilà'* the deed is done. I felt forced to try my villainous French, and congratulated Madame on the great beauty and undoubted excellence of the very palatable bread, to be met with unexpected shrieks of laughter. (Usually they are so polite about my French.) But it wasn't that. I hadn't noticed rows of cages full of black fox neckpieces on the hoof, and it seemed the bread was for them. I have rather gone off the idea of a matched pair of silver fox since realizing that they are alive things; I always thought of them as being satin-lined, not bread-lined animals.

As we were walking forward to the car, we passed the farm-house, also on the very roadside. The road seems to have gone bang through the front yard of that farm, leaving the outside oven on one side near the foxes while the



house and well are on the other. Hanging from the rather dilapidated veranda was a hand-hooked picture rug. Mumbling some more French, we were invited into the house to see other rugs for sale. Never have I seen such a spotless kitchen, spacious too. The white enamel stove glittered in an accusing way, the patterned linoleum shone like glass, there were bright scarlet geraniums in the deep-set windows, and in the inner kitchen, a pile of the most beautifully hooked rugs we had ever seen. More and more women and girls kept appearing, and finally, a youth who spoke a few words of English. It now appeared that these were all his sisters, bar one, who was a sister-in-law. Madame here admitted, rather apologetically, that her family was only eight, four girls and four boys. We congratulated her.

The designs of the rugs were especially good, and the actual hooking splendid. Upon further inquiry, it came out that one of the daughters had been sent to Montreal, to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, to learn the work. She adapted the designs and arranged the colours; some of the others dyed the clean rags, then they all worked together on the mats, following patterns taken from Canadian Artist Christmas cards, magazines, and even newspaper cuttings. We bought a wall rug, a typical French-Canadian winter scene, complete with yellow and red houses, blue-shadowed snow and figures in a sleigh, all for five dollars. Now in town these mats are often expensive, though, of course, some can be bought much more cheaply. In fact, I saw some looking much the same on the road

to Ste. Anne de Beaupré. It is always advisable to look at the backing of a rug or wall mat before buying. Particularly is this true of floor mats. Inquire if they will wash (mine won't) and never shake a hooked rug of any sort; the weight of the rags tears the backing and the whole thing falls apart.

Continuing on our way, it dawned on us that these country people have a natural gift for pure, primitive colour. They revel in it. Houses of every conceivable hue, some two or three, punctuate the rolling hillsides, their vivid reds, yellow, salmon pinks, greens and bright blues managing to blend into a delightful landscape, individual and original to French Canada alone. Definitely there is no exaggeration in the well-known Canadian School of Artists. Gagnon and Cullen pic-



tures popped round corners, emerged from deep valleys and decorated hillsides everywhere.

All hills are marked with a variety of signs, Slow Down, Keep Right, Low Gear. We met a large hay wagon, and wondered how so cumbersome a thing would deal with the traffic regulations on a hill. Can a horse go into low gear?

We found that our ears were beginning to worry us. Not so much the actual height, as because of the suddenness with which one achieves or loses altitude. Up, down,

up, down, onto sea level, up to two thousand feet.

We only went far enough into the town that time to cross the bridge that spans the Mal Baie River, and so right on up the hill, past some old houses and some aggressively new. Among others, we saw a rose-and-nigger-brown mansion looking much too sophisticated, and a very pseudo-cottage with about ten bathrooms, judging by the ventilation pipes, producing an air of self-conscious rurality very trying to behold. To offset all this I-do-so-love-the-country-if-the-plumbing-is-good atmosphere, a small girl stuck out her tongue at me. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin, so I stuck mine out at her! The girl child was so surprised she nearly bit herself! Apparently no grown-ups of her acquaintance did things like that. Poor little rich brat, she was probably getting rid of an inhibition or something.

As we left Mal Baie, a youth with two pails swinging from a wooden yoke around his neck crossed the road and plodded slowly up the hill to a whitewashed cottage. Possibly the pails contained water, or it may have been food for the inevitable silver foxes. Further on an ancient water-wheel turned with the immemorial clanking swish of centuries, and we were out into the country again.

After a number of visits, we came to the conclusion that Murray Bay is smothered in homespun, ranging from homespun to homespun, according to one's financial status. Blankets abound, lovely light woolly things in pastel colourings, checked in large square blocks or made in solid shades to match every bedroom. If your parti-

cular room needs a special shade, the Murray Bay dyers and crafts workers will arrange to make a blanket for your individual order, and perhaps one of the hand-woven spreads to match. These spreads are to be seen in the most subtle of colours, each with a design in white woven at the edge and usually with some traditional pattern for the centre piece; tree of life, or geometrical arrangements of so many white threads at intervals, with little knobby bulges where the thread has been loosened to make the pattern, all spaced into the background colour in simple but charming effects. These woven spreads launder like rags, I am told, and of course the woolly blankets wear and wash wonderfully.

Homespun cloth envelops one at every turn, and is always a pitfall and disaster, for who can resist Murray Bay homespun? The only thing to do is drive through the village at high speed and so make it impossible to see the shops at all, and should this course of action bring one to the traffic court of the Police Station, so much the better, as the fine will take up the money for homespuns! Thus, and thus only, can the tourist hope to get away from the lure of those fascinating yards of cloth.

The second time we came to Murray Bay, we were caught in the *habitant* loom; another time, with superb cowardice, we simply skirted the town, shot over the bridge and off up the far hillside, turning neither to homespun nor blankets, and so were delivered unscathed from the hands of the weavers. But on the last occasion, forewarned and so forearmed, we drove boldly into the

middle of everything and ended up, as most people do, at the Manoir Richelieu. This stupendous hostelry, devoted to the country holiday par-super-excellence-plus, out-chateaus any chateau of the Loire, and almost outdoes other Transportation Period Chateaus in Canada.

Having parked the car among an assortment of tumble-down Bagattis, dear old Bentleys and little next year's Packard sport models, we walked along the terrace, the justly famous terrace, high above the River. A soft breeze blowing upstream brought a tang of the ocean, and the masses of brilliant bloom in the gardens shook their fragrance on an unappreciative air, already overladen with the exotic perfumes of the Indies, the Orient, and Elizabeth Arden. Strange, and sometimes beautiful, female forms divine drifted about, or reclined (nobody just plain sat!) on low chairs, while animated pages from *Esquire* bent solicitously to light cigarettes, their gleaming hair and shoes vying with the correct checks of their sport jackets. The rarified correctness of the scene was getting monotonous, the whole *décor* so unbearably perfect that the advent of a typical cruise ship was almost a relief—a breath of mundane air upon the stratospheric heights. Up the hill came the horde of invading candid-camera hounds, eyes kindling behind huge sun glasses, and the voice of the multitude filled the halls of the Manoir with the cheerful din of the populace on holiday. Tourists poured like molten lead through the corridors and *salons*, while residents bolted into elevators, the swimming pool, or the woods. The invading multitude, cameras to eye, movies buzzing,



souvenirs a-jungle, swarmed over the halls, down the steps and out into the swimming pool building. Here the cameras clicked faster, and the movies buzzed over bathing beauties in the clear, blue waters of one of the loveliest swimming pools on the continent. The female camera fans swarmed about the bandstand, where at that moment the romantic Luigi Romanelli waved a languid baton at a platform full of swing maestros. A large notice requested silence at the time of the famous Romanelli National Hook-up broadcasts, but this was not one of the moments, so the pool echoed with laughter and the delightful sound of swinging water, and seagulls flew high over head, looking down on the open air swimming bath perched among the trees on a cliffside high above the River. As we left the building, a notice caught the eye "Dogs Not Allowed in the Swimming Pool." We brought Dogdog to read it, and he remarked that, after all, many dogs are valuable!

Returning one day to the Manoir after a fruitless search for the ancient and original manoir of the historical Murray Bay, Robin thought he would ask the vast Commissionaire at the main door.

"Commissionaires are supposed to know everything. Can you tell me where the old manoir of Mal Baie is?" The man seemed rather nonplussed. He pondered, then spoke.

"This is it, Sir," said he, waving a white gloved hand at the colossal structure behind him. Funnily enough, he was right, for the Manoir of Mal Baie was burned down

about twenty years ago, a sad loss to the historic remains of the province, and to-day's Manoir is in very truth "The Manoir". But it was a nice idea to imagine the sturdy Scottish and French settlers to whom the seigniories of Mal Baie were granted disporting themselves in the corridors and elevators, not to mention the blue swimming pool, of the Commissionaire's "Old Manoir".

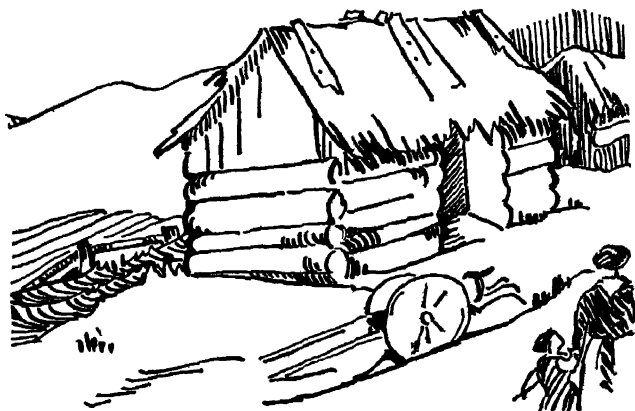
It is said that the collection of pictures in the Manoir Richelieu is the finest collection of Canadiana in one place in the country. Certainly it is a fascinating progress along the halls and into rooms, or down corridors all furnished in lavish style and containing some very fine pieces of old carved oak, following the prints, etchings and paintings of the Canadian scene from the earliest times—the French regime, plans drawn with the peculiar perspective of Champlain's day, or Kreighoff *habitant* scenes in all their human detail, and the portrait of General Murray, seen through a wooden grille door of a small room, is most effective, his scarlet uniform a patch of colour against the chimney head of plaster. And a huge painting of Columbus at the Court of Isabella of Spain is a fascinating canvas, of its sort, the fabric and the expressions on the faces of the priests being particularly interesting. Definitely a "genre" picture, a "conversation piece", and as such despised by the modern generation of artists, but all the same telling its story well, in an interesting, graphic way that impresses itself on the mind, and withal a decoration showing skill and that most neglected virtue of present day art, patience. I would still rather have the can-

was "conversation piece" of Columbus than that picturization of a florid imagination showing a fur-lined tea cup, two over-ripe eggs on the half shell, and a single pink eye among the plumbing fixtures of a tenement block, entitled "Ecstasy in Retrospect" or "Spring Comes Gently", I've forgotten which, that I saw at an exhibition not long ago. No, give me Columbus and his sales talk any day!

The glorious golf course belonging to the Manoir Richelieu is on top of the world. Someone said that one drives to terrific lengths up there as the rarified air causes no resistance to the ball! A rather rarified story, we thought, but that course is worthy of slight exaggeration. Being the type of golfer who, with luck, hits the ball in one, I am not in position to describe the playing beauties of the links, but the scenic beauties are almost sufficient in themselves. Green grass in an effortless velvet sweep runs up and down rolling hillsides, broken at intervals with trees and the bright yellow of the sand bunkers, blue sky, garnished with puffy clouds above, and below the broad watered ribbon of the St. Lawrence.

These were rough uplands when the first settlers came, and even the water side of the settlement was not too good. In the very early charts made by Cartier and Champlain, the anchorage was marked as bad. Hence the French name "La Mal Baie", the Bad Bay. The name of Murray came into general use after the British conquest, when two Highland officers of Wolfe's army, Nairn and Fraser, were granted the land and named it after the General commanding in Quebec at the time. But the original seigni-

ory was granted in 1672 to a man called Sieur Gaultier de la Comporte, and before de la Comporte's time, Champlain had mapped the River edges of the territory and remarked that the Mal Baie lands might be good for farming. Now the whole surrounding countryside is a vast patchwork quilt of highly cultivated fields, feather-stitched together by snake fences, the blue ribbon of the Mal Baie River weaving through the valley to join the St. Lawrence, to tie another knot into the woven pattern of the Great River.



## CORDUROY—ROADSONG

WE ran into heavy rain and before reaching St. Catharines Bay it had turned the day into a cold grey evening. The ferry to Tadoussac had left twenty minutes before, and the hour was four-thirty. Both of these items depressed us, the latter because we were beginning to feel hungry, and now realized we had run out of daylight into standard time, and food, if any, was some time off. As for the ferry, the next one was at seven-thirty, standard time.

Robin learned all this, standing in the dripping rain at a small pole telephone at the end of the wind-swept wharf. He hung up and had squelched bleakly back to the car when a prolonged tinkling in the 'phone box recalled him. Good news! We could have supper while we waited. Madame at the Post Office would oblige, and we could sit in the house. Yes or No? Definitely yes, more so as the wind was rising across the River and it was cool.

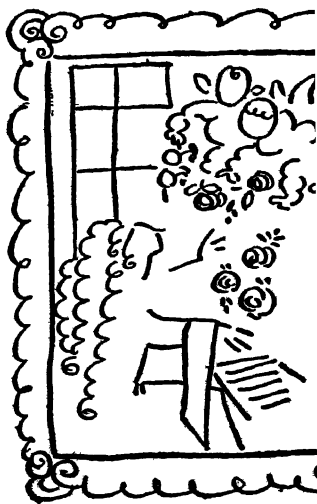
Turning back from the wharf towards the Post Office



we encountered a large, opulent sports car coming down to the landing, presumably for the non-present ferry. We stopped the car to tell the two occupants, in passing, that the ferry was gone, and so save them a useless mile of bad road. They rather too obviously did not like talking to tramps in dirty cars on deserted roads. They may have thought us a hold-up (though I hope we don't really qualify for the toughs of those episodes!), or they may have placed us more as "poor white trash" and, judging by the girl, very poor, not particularly white at that! Later in the evening, sauntering into the dining-room at the Tadoussac Hotel with our friends from Toronto, we viewed with some pleasure the blank amazement on the socially correct faces of those two young people. Of course, we were definitely cleaner than when they had seen us before.

Madame the Post-Mistress, who is bi-lingual and efficient, welcomed us cheerfully, said supper would be ready in an hour, and ushered us into the presence of the fourth St. Cecilia and the over-stuffed cherubs. We were delighted to find ourselves among old friends and promptly went to sleep.

Some time later the smell of frying onions, combined with coffee, brought us to life. The meal was served in the spotless dining-room, and sitting at one end of the huge family table we could see into the little store with the Post Office in



one corner. Packets of corn flakes jostled dignified government notices and all-day suckers, stickily impudent, leaned against By Order of the Postmaster-General literature of all colours. There was even one about Air Mail, in case any fisherman or little back-river farmer should get drunk and waste the hard-earned sous on sending a letter in such a heathen way. By air forsooth! As if anyone wanted to write letters anyway, even if they knew how, when there was the late hay to be got in and new snow shoes to be made for little Aristide. Better take the bullock team and just go over to St.



Philemon and see Cousin Ba'tiste instead of all this *Par Avion* flummery.

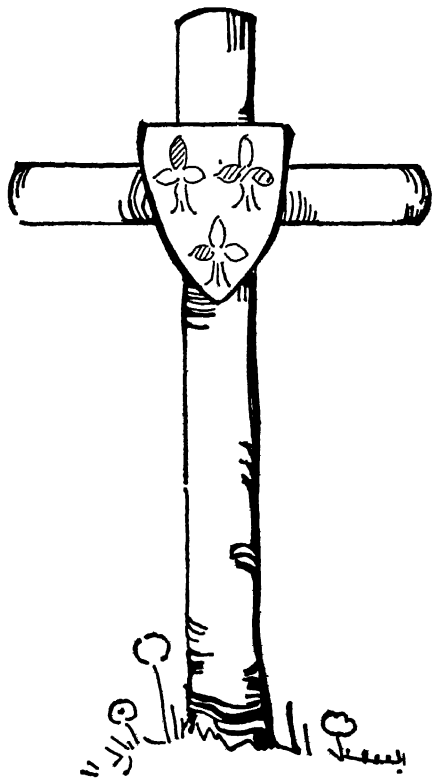
We ate an excellent country supper of French-Canadian pea soup, corn beef hash with onions (at least we didn't eat the onions), French fried potatoes and green peas, salad, and then, never despairing, we topped off with apple pie and coffee, all to the accompaniment of the telegraph ticker in the Post Office. Madame says she never notices the ticker unless it gives her own call sign, then, wherever she is, or whatever she is doing, she comes running to take the message from the outer world.

Very well upholstered and considerably cheered, we paid Madame and thanked her. Two men came in later and also had food before ferry time, so it seems quite the regular thing to have one of the Post Office-on-the-Hill meals if you get stuck on the St. Catharines wharf.

The ferry runs from St. Catharines Bay to Tadoussac, across the broad mouth of the Saguenay River.

Having manœuvred on board the tossing, flat ferry, we spent the rest of the trip across the white-capped waters in wondering if we would stay on. It is phenomenal how that ferry boat can roll on the least provocation! Very soon it wallowed its uncertain way into the landing stage on the Tadoussac side, and we drove blindly off the wharf up a dark hill. Of course, it was the wrong hill, but in time we arrived at our hotel and parked thankfully in the yard.

Tadoussac, when we saw it next morning, in brilliant sunshine, was small and charming, a little forgotten settlement, where over three hundred years ago Jacques Cartier planted the seed that was Canada. Christianity and commerce both had their Canadian beginnings here, and





fur-trading with the Indians was vastly profitable to those early French traders.

Ginterman's irreverent, but delightful little verse fits the situation:

"The Pilgrims landed, worthy men  
And, saved from wreck on raging seas,  
They fell upon their knees, and then  
Upon the Aborigines."

Not so much in the way of battle, as in the way of trade, for undoubtedly the furs were bought at a Traders' Low and sold in France at a Merchants' High. Big Business in Beavers or Trade Boom in the Wilderness! But, following the set pattern in Canadian history, the Fui Trader brought the Rogue Trader, and the Rogue Trader brought the Trade Rum, and the Trade Rum brought the evils of civilized white man to the camps of the uncivilized red man, and the troubles began that have always, sooner or later, led to bloodshed.

All this was in the later fifteen-hundreds. In the very early sixteen-hundreds, Champlain tried to balance things up by arranging the French Treaty with the Algonquins. This seemed a masterly stroke, but proved to be the greatest mistake the Father of Canada ever made in his policy for New France. In this treaty Champlain allied New France with a tribe of peace-loving Indians. Against them were their hereditary enemies, the Fighting Iroquois, the greatest warriors of all the Indian tribes, the fiercest haters, and most unforgetting foes. The Algonquins were harried and decimated through the

years that followed, until the remnant of a once powerful people sought shelter on the Island of Orleans, under the protection of the invading white man. Years later, the unforgiving Iroquois were still the terror of New France, their raids a menace to the French settlements from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Lake Champlain and west, as far as the Ottawa River. A long, bloody thread woven through the early Canadian homespun, a thread spun out from the wheel of destiny was set a-spinning the day Jacques Cartier first set foot on land at Tadoussac.

The Tadoussac trading post prospered, and the Mission with it. The Algonquins were friendly, in spite of their first disappointment at not being paid for fresh water by all the Palefaces. The Indian story told how, when the first Paleface (Cartier)



came in his big canoe-with-sails, his sailors rushed ashore in search of fresh water. The wily Indians bargained with the sailors and offered to guide them to good water. Cartier paid the guides with much gold coin. Then the

simple aborigines walked over the slight rise of ground and showed the French sailor men the wide-flowing fresh waters of the Saguenay pouring into the salt St. Lawrence just around the corner! However, when Samuel de Champlain's party arrived many years later, they knew all about fresh water, and the Indians got no more gold coins. The gold was completely useless anyway, but perhaps it was the first stirring of the Profit-from-the-Tourist move-

ment, and may have been yet another seed planted in the fertile soil of Tadoussac!

The River waters lapped the shore and in the tiny steeple of the Chapel of Tadoussac birds were building. A few straws fell at the sandalled feet of the Jesuit priest who sat upon the steps, clasp knife in idle hands, gazing out across the wide waters to the misty South Shore. He sighed.

"The Holy Virgin help me". He raised deep-set eyes to Heaven. "For of a surety I know not how to start this thing." He took up a short piece of peeled wood. "And I must have candlesticks for Corpus Christi."

Suddenly the priest applies the knife and chips of wood fly to right and left. The building birds take the golden chips for the hardwood flooring of their new



home; the sun sinks behind the hills of the Kingdom of Saguenay, but the black-robed priest whittles on. Long after the birds had finished their nest, during many a sunset-time, the priest sat whittling. Until one pearl grey evening no more chips lay on the steps of the little chapel. The tall, black-robed priest stood in the sunset glow, holding a pair of wooden altar candlesticks in his cut hands. The year is 1647. The place the Jesuit Mission of Tadoussac.

The home-made candlesticks were only in use a short time, for in the same year the ornately carved and gilded crucifix and six white and gold candlesticks were sent out from France. The purchase price of these church ornaments was donated by the Indians of the Mission in beaver skins.

Interest in high places for the little *chapelle* brought some strange gifts to the wilderness: an Infant Jesu doll, given by Louis the Fourteenth, the extravagant, sybaritic King of France, and dressed by his scheming Queen, Anne of Austria, presumably between one political intrigue and the next. Later, in 1755, when the Acadians were expelled from Nova Scotia and all their goods were scattered to the four winds, an oil painting of the Child Jesus, saved from the stone Church at Grand Pré, found sanctuary in the Mission at Tadoussac. Who, in that tragic, desperate exodus, carried away into exile a large oil painting of the Infant Jesus? Was it the old Curé of Grand Pré? The story is lost in the limbo of the past.

In 1647 the Mission Chapel was built on a spot already

replete with history. Years earlier the first Mass ever to be said on Canadian soil was read beside the St. Lawrence River at Tadoussac. Here also landed Hélène Champlain and a Mass was said in thanksgiving for her safe arrival in the New World. The nuns going up to Quebec in 1638 had landed here and given thanks for safe harbour after a stormy voyage; and the first missionary Father had begun his soul-saving among the infidel savages at the mouth of the Saguenay River in the very dawn of French colonial days. Now the Old Mission stands on the edge of a summer colony, dreaming old dreams, undisturbed by the raucous twentieth century, or the hotel guests playing tennis practically on the door-step where sat the whittling, black-robed priest, three hundred years ago.

Animals are not allowed in the hotel but we had to have Dogdog as there was no other place to put him. He was a great social success and basked in the adoration of the multitude, becoming so unbearably self-complacent, with coy attitudes and beggings for food, that we were quite relieved when he fell in a deep mud puddle on the golf links and forgot his lap-dog aspirations in one good barking fit.

The reason for the ban on dogs is that many people have valuable children and thoughtless dogs might bite them.

Behind Tadoussac one day we ran into a country wedding. It seemed, on first sight, to be a mass of pink streamers, pink pop and small beer. Later the bride's mother emerged clasping a large ham to her ample bosom and

some unspecified male relative cut hunks off and handed them around the scattered wedding party. All this while the whole cavalcade of three cars and a waggon, waited for the sweating owner of the fourth car to repair a blow-out. He, being slow, and slightly beery, was making a long job of it, so the party had a picnic wedding breakfast in the roadside ditch with much merriment at the expense of the swearing tire-changer. Everyone loved watching him, and when he dropped a large wrench on his foot they all lay back and yelled with laughter. The helping hand was noticeably absent, the wedding spirit was abroad, and all were wrapped in a glorious haze of pink pop and beer. Almost in hysterics at the wretched worker, who had just banged his head under the fender and cut a hunk out of his eyebrow, they waved, we waved, they cheered, we cheered, and then we left.

Later that day we all forgathered at a camp and had much good talk in three languages. An English-speaking Austrian Doctor from New York talked about Freud, with whom she had studied in Vienna of the old days, while a French-Canadian couple charmed us with tales of this, the true *habitant* countryside, the stories quaint and earthy, told in perfect colloquial English, the language enriched by their Gallic witticisms. At the other end of the long table a blond giant of a New Yorker speaking German was in earnest about the European situation, his remarks interspersed with the Viennese Frau Doctor's interpretations of German mentality, each moving from language to language as their meaning became more and

more involved. The English publisher looked earnestly at the naval man and asked what was the attitude of the Powers that be on the international situations, generally, and the Navy replied, quite simply, in English, that he didn't know! And then supper was served and the talk subsided enough for a soft burr of conversation to seep in from the verandah where another party was conversing in the accents of Scotland all about a "wee fush" they hadn't caught on the lake that day! The name of this camp should surely be "Little-Babel-on-the-Lake"!

And so back to the sleeping hotel, with the northern lights shaking white fingers above us in the vault of the clear night sky, the timeless watchers of the passing pageant of man.

## WATERED SILK—THE DEEP RIVER

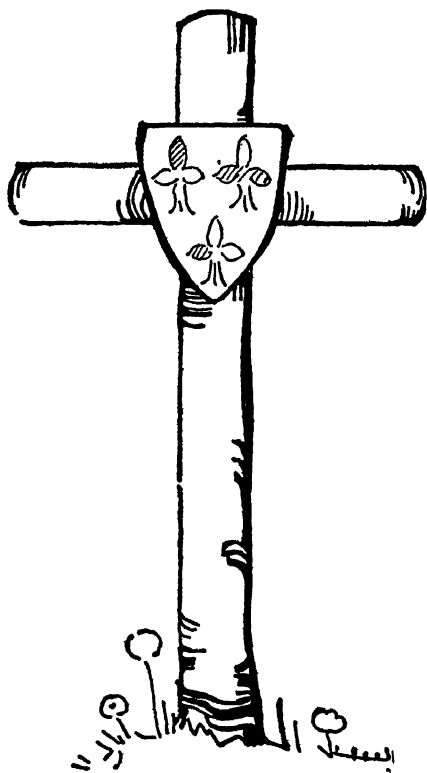
IT WAS misty, with the shreds of last night's fog creeping up the sides of the Saguenay fjord. The chugging engine of the old schooner disturbed a flight of duck, but otherwise nothing seemed awake on the river that morning. Further up a spotlight of sunshine leapt through the mists and caught a bridal veil of water that falls sheer six hundred feet from the perpendicular rock.

Grey water eddied around the little ship as it ploughed up the "Deep Water" as the Indians called this river. Sheer rocks rising clean-cut out of the bottomless current give a sensation of depth, quite apart from the fact that the Saguenay has no known bottom in parts of its course. No sounder of the depths has yet plumbed to the bed of the stream that Jacques Cartier charted as "of great deeps".

When Cartier sailed a few miles up the river about the middle of September, 1535, it must have looked much the same, but in those days the great cliffs held menace, and the currents swirled down over unknown navigation dangers. Did Cartier delight in the veil of falling water as a natural beauty, or had it the added delight of fresh water for the crew of his little ship? Presumably the water situation was not worrying the Captain at that time, because he had filled the reeking water barrels at Tadoussac,



where he landed and parleyed with the Algonquins. When Jacques Cartier and his crew found no wind to fill the square-rigged sails, did they do as we did—go ashore on



a half-portion island and pick blueberries, and the luscious, wild raspberries, and bang viciously at deer flies the size of aeroplanes? Or did they swim in the ice-cold stream that rushes out onto a little green delta of grass, as we didn't, having the benefit of hot baths which Cartier and company had been without for a long time? Of course, this matter of baths is a vastly over-rated fancy, and the intense cleanliness of to-day would have been practically witchcraft to the gal-

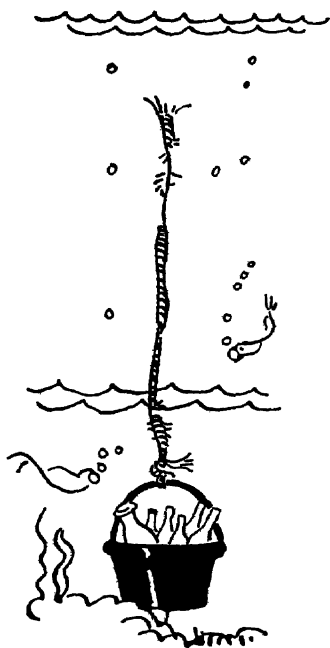
lant mariners of the fifteen-somethings! What they liked was a protective covering of reasonable dirt to turn aside the evil eye, the weather, and the fear of colds! And perchance for that very reason the deer fly did not bother

the gallant crew as they crashed about the blueberry slopes under the suspicious, but not as yet, hostile eyes of the native Indians.

By now the sunshine had chased the last fog down to the refuge of all good fogs, the Newfoundland Banks, and up among the Saguenay cliffs we were basking in hot weather and sunburn lotion. Lunch came, with our wretched cooks grilling steaks in the unstand-up-able forward galley, the wood stove beating up in their martyred faces, and the sun beating down on the ceiling within half an inch of their damp permanent waves. And then, "unkindest cut of all", the bucket came untied and, with all the drinks, fell down to those "damned deeps" of the Saguenay and was seen no more. Our drinks, in all their variety and degree, were at the bottom of a bottomless river

"Suffer[ing] a sea-change

Into something rich and strange"  
doubtless, but even Shakespeare couldn't assuage the aridness and no poetic thought could banish the sudden earnest desire for drink of all sorts. Even quite moderate drinkers yammered for beer, and the



children yelped for ginger ale, their round, reproachful eyes glazing as they realized the full horror of the situation.

We knew exactly how Cartier felt. Obviously we were a reincarnation of the great explorers, our trials were many, our thirst terrific, but were we downhearted? No! Some great, though dry, soul raised his voice in the songs of the country—

“When lumber camps are far away  
Our hearts will both be blithe and gay—”

we sang through, into

“Roulent, roulent  
Ma boule roulent  
Oh, roulent ma boule-a—”

so into the modern songs, and finally, by some curious swing of ideas, into the Brahms “Cradle Song”. So rarified an atmosphere could scarcely be associated with beer, or even ginger ale, so all was forgotten as we upped anchor and chugged away upstream.

The river that day was patterned with floating pulp-wood logs from a pulp-wood slide above Bergeron, and our thrifty boatman saw next winter’s firewood going past on every wave. At last he could stand it no longer; gesticulating wildly he ordered his son to out with a boat hook and try some spearing on the beautiful, plump logs. The son was clever at this game, and in no time a nice pile of measured logs lay piled on the stern. The Captain beamed a brown-toothed smile, and as a reward took the boat almost ashore to show us a cave.

There is always something romantic, though faintly

sinister, about a cave This one was no exception. Twenty feet deep, gloomy and moist, it even had the remains of a camp fire cold and black on the middle distance floor, and the sound of the boat's engine echoed eerily into the damp heart of the rock.

It was easy to picture a bronzed sailor man out of St. Malo crouching on the flat rock floor, drawing a rough map by the flickering flame of a wood fire; a boat waits below the cave, the sailors resting on long oars, singing softly through their teeth in sailor kind, while they wait for their Captain to finish his chart. He is rising and stamping out the fire, soon he is in the boat, and the rhythmic splash of oars echoes in the cave as Jacques Cartier is rowed away downstream towards the faint glow that is the riding light of his ship.

The Saguenay flows down from its mountain fastnesses past tall cliffs which, however, never quite reach the point where the sheer bluffs come together and form a canyon impossible of navigation. Always some bay widens out in the nick of time, where lies a prosperous-looking little settlement, snug in the fold of the mountains.

Such is the delightful village of Anse St. Jean Either by road or by water, the approach is picturesque, but I prefer the steep down-hill from the main road, with the valley spread out below, ending in the brilliant blue waters of the Saguenay. The village is charming, and the natural amphitheatre is again the light opera atmosphere, perfect for some idyllic play in one of those romantic "somewhere in Europe" settings, where people sing all day, and most

of the night, when they are not going off to change into other colourful costumes. In Anse St. Jean life is less operatic, though I did hear a woman singing at her work in one of the cottages down by the river, and the costumes are less flamboyant! In one particular, this valley really does resemble the light opera country, in that it seems to exist within a magic ring of peace, remote from the outer world, and very remote from the alarms and crises of to-day.

A white shower of waterfall cascades down the mountain on the far side of the green valley floor, where cows wade in the lush grass, and white ducks swim about the backwater of a sparkling river. An old-fashioned, covered bridge spans the rapids, taking the road across to the far farm-houses in the shadow of the waterfall rock. Beyond the green farm lands, the Saguenay sparkles in the sunlight.

Driving to the end of the road, we found that a government wharf jutted out in a rather self-conscious manner, giving an official note to the simplicity of the rural picture. The wharf is the most used communication to and from the outer world, and Anse St. Jean is proud of this modern improvement—not only proud, but, being a practical people, they make full use of all that the Government offers in the way of commercial amenities. All the butter and general dairy produce, for which the valley is renowned, and upon which it mainly lives, go out by boat down the Saguenay, up the St. Lawrence, to Quebec or Montreal, and so to the markets of the country. In the

winter the roads in this part of Quebec are snowed under, and the occasional ships are the thread of civilization in the winter homespun of the *habitant* farmers of the Saguenay.

Leaving the village at the top of the valley, we stopped yet again to look back on this most charming place, and to make a sketch from the steps of the tall Church that spreads its protective shadow across the cottages clustered below. It really seemed as if the Christus with the outstretched arms was protecting this quiet haven from the world of to-day.

Having forgotten to bring our lunch, the pangs of hunger, suppressed until now, rent our vitals. Robin bought some terrifying biscuits in the minute store. They were bulgy and virulently pink, and tasted, I thought, of bath salts, but Robin said it was merely a taste of all the village stores on earth.

Leaving the village, a barber sign tacked onto an ancient cottage struck a modern note, but this was contradicted half a mile further on, when we saw a young woman sitting spinning the natural wool twirling onto the flying wheel through her practised hands. Stopping the car, we asked if we might watch her work.

"But yes, Madame. But there is nothing of interest to see."

"Truly, Madame, it is of great interest to us, as we have never seen anyone actually spinning."

The whirring wheel stopped, and Madame gazed at us in amazement.

"Incredible!" said she, catching the twisted thread as it doubled back onto the bobbin. "But surely you joke?"

"No, it is the truth." We assured her we were serious, as at first she seemed to think we were making fun of her remark, and could not believe that anyone could be so uneducated as never to have seen a spinning wheel at work. Soon the wheel was whirring round again, its sibilant humming reminiscent of so many of the songs of the country folk. The peculiar whirring buzz of a spinning wheel gives music of its own, and to make some words to match that melody cannot be so very difficult. Many of the folk-songs of all languages are spinning songs, and Madame was crooning to herself unconsciously now as she twisted the thread. First the wool is carded out on a spiked board, then the strings of fluffy wool are laid ready on a chair beside the worker. Now Madame takes the remaining old thread that is left on the spool and, starting the wheel, twists the newly carded wool expertly onto the old thread. Pulling evenly and gently, all the time the fluffy carded stuff is turned into an even twisted thread and runs onto the spool with the other wool. Madame picks up another fluffy, carded lump that becomes a twisted thread, another, and another, as the flying wheel whirrs round at an incredible speed, making an arc of light in the air.

"*Voilà,*" says Madame as the wheel spins to a humming stop. "It is easy" She rises, pushing aside two small boys and easing the baby onto the veranda floor, where Father now takes charge. Father has arrived from the

back somewhere, and all are now interested spectators of a side-splitting interlude.

"*Voilà, Madame,*" says this simple soul. "Here is the thread," says this guileless peasant, and hands the whole horrid contraption to me!

What can a poor, unlearned city woman do in such circumstances? Meantime, everyone, including Robin, settled down to a good hearty laugh, and I swear that even the baby gurgled with mirth. I looked at the machine, at the bits of carded fluff, at the anticipatory smirk on all those faces, and spun like a maniac. The result was a most surprising length of knobby thread, rather like a boa constrictor with indigestion, some very thin places and some extremely bulgy places, and then the thread snapped, twirled back with a rush, and the whole lot snarled up on the spool in a Chinese puzzle of knots. The delighted audience lay back against the veranda walls and yelled with laughter.

I arose, reached for the bag of pink biscuits, handed one to each of the audience, thus attaining popularity, and so salving my humbled pride and sidetracking the general interest from wool to food. Thus ended the spinning episode of Anse St. Jean.

\* \* \*

By road the northward trail runs from St. Simeon towards Chicoutimi and the great pulp lands of the Saguenay. The main interest for the first few miles is without doubt the signs adorning the numerous fishing camps,



hunting camps, and just plain camps. Some are quite apparent, but others have to be taken on trust, as the only sign of anything at all seems to be a large, often dilapidated notice saying "Big Trouts" or less cheerily, "Best



Salmons for Ammetuers" (probably the sort out of a tin, after a hard day's fishing!). "*Club de Perche aux Tourists*" may be freely translated as "A Club Fishing for Tourists."

Along the roadside runs a good-sized river, and at one point a whole family debouched from the river bushes—Papa, Uncle Henri, and five assorted family, all carrying dozens of small, silver fish strung onto willow twigs. Everyone was very cheerful, and not a little proud of this magnificent catch, but not one of those fish was of the legal size; all would have been throw-backs for an amateur fisherman. It is more than possible that the family fishing may account for the absence in this river of the much-advertised "Big Trouts", and it seems short-sighted to allow these rivers to become fished out, as they undoubtedly will be, if all the family, including Great Grand-père, Aunt Mathilde, Cousin Jean from St. Simeon, Mother and the varied children, are allowed to catch anything that can swim, every Friday morning.

Further along, the first serious blueberry picking came into view. From then onwards, through the whole of our time in the Saguenay and Lake St. John district, we were

haunted by blueberries in every stage of growth, gathering, grading, and going, for this is a definite industry, and a paying one. Who can resist the sweet blueberries with the purple-grey bloom still on the fruit, fresh from the warm barrens of the Upper Saguenay? Montreal and New York pay willingly for the export fruit, but we got out and picked ambrosial handfuls of sun-warmed berries, our stained hands and ink-black teeth all part of the childish pleasure.

The rounded mountains are a little reminiscent of Scotland, particularly when the wraiths of mist wander up the steep sides of some hill and shafts of sunlight pierce through into a valley, picking out a small farm, or the glint of water. But the colour is different. The vivid, deep blue of the Laurentians still persists. In one farm-yard, as if for the single purpose of creating a Canadian Artists Christmas card picture, a man wearing a scarlet shirt worked before a vivid yellow cottage, while the blue cotton dresses of his two little girls complemented the blue mountain background, the whole simple scene brilliant with sunlight. Further along stands a Crucifix, in the shadow of a hill, and a man comes out from the shade, on his way to the barn, a rude yoke across his shoulders, two dripping pails slung from it. The Shrine is at the well, at once a thanksgiving for good water and a convenient place to say a prayer, without much loss of time. Thus is the practical and spiritual common sense of the devout country people perfectly illustrated on the lonely road from St. Simeon to the north.

The way is good; much has been done to the roads leading to the St. Jean country, and much is still being done. In one of the "being done" places, we stuck. It was on a steep hill which, as we approached, seemed alive with scarlet- and blue-shirted workmen, brilliant bandana handkerchiefs about their necks, giving the gang a distinctly "Maid of the Mountains" chorus-of-brigands effect. They turned out to be "very *parfait gentil*" brigands, when we came to a clammy, clayey stop in their midst. With cheerful yells, they man-handled that car out of axle-deep clay in no time, deposited us on the crown of the hill, and saw us off with smiles, shouts and waving caps, and went singing back to work. The whole incident had such a light-opera touch that we felt it necessary to sing, and did. This scared a serious-minded grey heron which rose suddenly from the river edge, flying lazily towards the incredibly blue mountains, disdain in every feather.

With a good deal of ear-popping, we climbed a steep hill, only realizing from a sign at the top that we were on



the summit of Cape Eternity, one of the two famous Capes of the Saguenay. From the river, these great masses of rock tower sheer and awesome above the water, and a feeling of smallness comes upon the voyager in the shadow of

their overpowering cliffs. If the effect of these towering rocks is still noticeable to passengers in the white cruise ships of to-day, what must the awe-inspiring sight have been to the crew of Champlain's tiny ship exploring up the Saguenay in 1603?

Possibly by that time nothing surprised the French sailors; they may have been quite blasé, for any man who stayed with the Sieur Samuel de Champlain for long was assured of more surprising adventures and greater excitements, not to say dangers, than all the Armies of King Henry of France put together. Of a surety, the Captain Champlain was a one for adventure. Regard the matter of the Colony he was thinking of starting up the St. Laurent at Kebec, as if the Port Royal affair in Acadia was not of a sufficiency. Nothing but trouble and trials; not, mark you, but it would have been successful had the politicians kept out—always wanting everything out of a new country and not sending enough food or guns for the Colony. And now Kebec. Indians, and rocks, and snow of a deepness to cover up the roofs of Paris, aye, even the Bastille prison. What a man, but what a Captain to follow! And now this Saguenay River business. Look at those black rocks, enough to put a man off his bread and salt pork for a week. And the Indians told the Captain of the great depth of this river, no bottom has it, they say. "Saguenay" in their own language means "Deep Waters". Ugh! To go overboard here is not of a goodness, for me I swim not. And the heathen God, Manitou, he comes for the poor sailor man in these outstanding parts. Ave Maria, keep the

Manitou away from a poor sailor out of Dieppe, where Christians live in peace, and let not the Manitou god of the red savages get me! Amen. And two candles the next time we see a Chapel to Our Lady. Maybe the Captain will build a Shrine in the new settlement of Kebec Make it three candles. The water is black and deep, and the



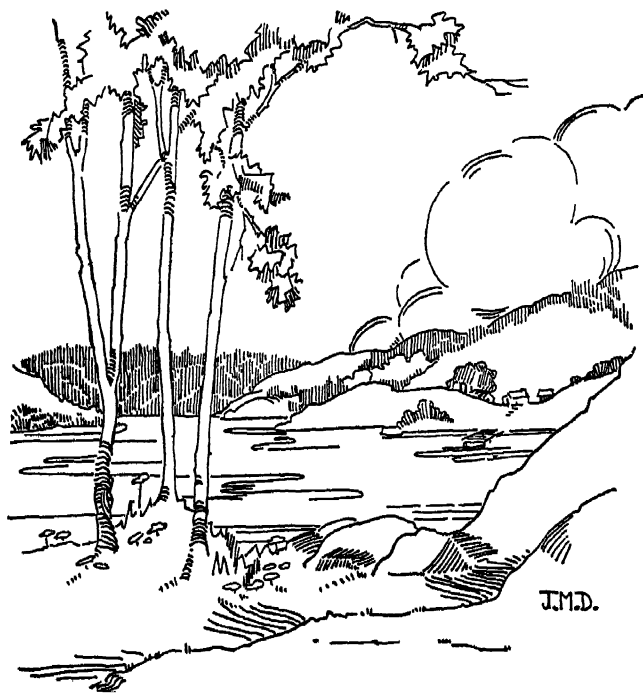
Manitou god lives mayhap on top of yon great Cape. What say you, Louis? The Captain, he has named the black cliffs? One for the Blessed Trinity? That will of a surety scare the Manitou. And what calls he the other? *Cap Eternité*? Good names, good names, and no place for a

heathen Manitou god. Sail on, mon Capitaine, who fears the Deep Waters when they are guarded by the Holy Trinity? (Perhaps one candle will do after all!).

It is strange that though Cartier, that most inquisitive man, discovered the Saguenay as early as 1535, and was impressed by the little he sailed of its waters, nothing was done in the way of exploration or exploitation, for nearly seventy years. Then, in 1603, Champlain reported a

splendid river, but "very unsuitable earth" and "very unsuitable earth" it remained for well over two hundred years. It is the amazing fact that the upper Saguenay and Lake St. John portion of Quebec was totally without settlers and without farmed lands until 1837, and that it is only one hundred years ago this year, 1940, that the first crop in the Lake St. John country was harvested. In good part this lack of settlement was due to the influences and oppressions of the fur-trading companies, first the French fur traders, and after the British occupation, the Hudson's Bay Company. It was not until the eighteen-twenties that the great French Canadian statesman, Pascal Taché, brought the matter before the Legislature, proving that this part of the province was capable of settlement, and met with complete opposition from the Hudson's Bay Company, an opposition that continued until the Company's charter expired in 1842. Meantime the Napoleonic wars had created a great demand for Canadian timber for the navy ships, and William Price had started the great company that to-day forms the backbone of the Saguenay-Lake St. John industrial life. Pulpwood, pulp and paper are the main assets of the country, with the Aluminum Company of Canada plant adding its far from small quota, and Hydro Electric Power dominating all. The tremendous dairying, stock, and farm-produce export trade provides a livelihood for many of the *habitant* population to-day—an industry derived solely from "earth very unsuitable", or so it seemed to the usually far-seeing eyes of the Father of Canada when he and his

crew of superstitious sailor men sailed the Saguenay, and named the guardian cliff on whose top we now stood.



## GREEN BAIZE—THE KINGDOM OF SAGUENAY

CHICOUTIMI stands at the end of the navigable Saguenay—navigable, that is, for steamships of any size, the Canada Steamships, cruise vessels, the pulp boats and the deep sea freighters bringing ore to the aluminium works at near-by Arvida. Here also have come the Canadian naval destroyers, on visits to their name rivers. H.M. C.S. *Saguenay* and H.M.C.S. *St Laurent*, along with the others of their class, have been given the names of the great Canadian rivers.

An impressive, tall cross stands on a bluff across the river from the town of Chicoutimi, and dominates the scene, while tall brick buildings of amazing size declare themselves as various religious institutions, dominated by an impressive Church. There seem to be a great number of these large buildings in Chicoutimi, so it must be the

educational and hospital, as well as the industrial and manufacturing centre of the district.

The highlight of Chicoutimi that particular day was a cheerful man who rapidly called magic words through a rather flyblown hatch.





"Hemsangwith," he intoned, and again "Hemsangwith," with a variation of "Coffeetwoand creamquick," at intervals until we had overcome the pangs that had first assailed us at Anse St. Jean hours earlier. It was some eleven hours since we had eaten, not counting two of the incredible, pink biscuits in the village, and by the time the little restaurant in Chicoutimi materialized, we were starving. Never will I live down the leaving of our lovely lunch, thermos and all, in the Hotel at Tadoussac!

We got a little lost among Kinogami, and had some conversation with two car-conscious cows eating raspberries in a ditch. It is amazing how traffic-trained these cows are. None of the old-time cavorting about in the middle of the road, or standing still in deep thought, undisturbed by frantic horn-blowing. Instead the herd eyes right, dressing by the left horn, and quick steps into the ditch, chewing contentedly while the traffic goes by. On we went through the Company town of Arvida, a neat, small place cut to an absolute pattern, and out into the great open spaces again. Finally, in the last of the northern twilight into St. Joseph d'Alma, where we stayed for a time, making our headquarters in Riverbend, the Company town of the Price Brothers Pulp and Paper Company.

This little model township has a policeman, very smart, who chases children home at the sound of the curfew, gives local information to inquisitive visitors, and looks extremely decorative; a fire department, housed in a fire hut, some pretty houses standing in lovely, flower-

filled gardens, handsome children, rosy-cheeked (possibly because of the curfew), and bright pink sidewalks that glisten like pink topaz in the rain.

Pink and green are the colour notes of all the Lake St. John district—green, extravagantly green, pasture lands, green crops, some beginning to ripen, but mainly still unripe, even in the end of August. This is one of the uncertainties of farming so far to the north, often wonderful yields are not fully ripe when the long northern winter clamps down its first killing frost, and whole fields of tall grain lie blackened and useless about the farm-houses. Green trees, a number of Lombardy poplars, imported with the settlers, send spearheads into an alien sky but give a definitely French feeling to the lush, pastoral countryside. Pink cattle chew contentedly, roaming at large, and, strutting about in a vivid green field, was a most impressive red bull. He was rather annoyed, and flicked his tail in a non-pacifist way. I am sure his name was not Ferdinand. Hanging over the field gate was the brute's owner, and they looked remarkably alike. Drawing from my less classical education, I recited:

“Growled a surly old farmer of Shoreham  
‘When people trespass I ignore ‘em  
But my bull, who runs free,  
Has instructions from me  
To pursue the intruders and gore ‘em’ ”

“Shall I tell you some more limericks?” offered Robin.

I looked him in the eye, and didn't much like the glint therein.

"No," I said.

Pink pigs, of a polished pinkness unknown to other less particular porkers, skip about green water meadows, and one luxurious piglet lay on his back in a shallow of the Peribonka, gargling a piggy aria and waving pink spats in the air.

All this vast expanse of territory is classified to-day as "The Maria Chapdelaine Country" from the famous French-Canadian novel of that name written by Louis Hémon in the first quarter of the nineteen-hundreds. It



is a true story of the pioneers, the sturdy *habitant* farmers who broke the land and planted the first crops on the marge of the Peribonka River—a story with a tragic love theme, a robust background of toil, and the simple, devout flavour of the *habitant* life dominating the tale.

Louis Hémon came out from France searching for types to observe, and settled down among the farmers of Peribonka. He not only lived among them, but worked for his living, hard manual labour, stumping, burning, breaking virgin land to the plough, sweating or freezing,

building the rough homes of the pioneer settlement in the outlying places, and lodging with the sister of his heroine, Maria Chapdelaine. No one dreamed that he was an author, or that he was writing a book about the village—least of all the heroine.

Maria was a young girl with three suitors, Lorenzo Suprenant was rich, and lived in the States, where he could take a bride and make her a great lady, who would not have to work in the fields or even make her own clothes. François Paridis was a woodsman, and a great hunter, a man of fine physique, handsome, with soft, piercing eyes. Eutrope Gagnon was a settler, a farmer on his own hand-cleared land, sturdy and safe. Maria loved Paridis and chose him from among her suitors, but he had to leave for the lumber camps for the winter tree felling. He promised to come back to her in the spring, but tragedy intervened. Unable to bear being without a sight of his sweetheart any longer, the handsome François Paridis started out through the snow-buried forest for the settlement on the Peribonka. Maria never sees François, for he is never heard of again, and Maria realizes that her lover has died romantically for her sake, in the impenetrable forest.

But this is not enough of tragedy. Not long after the lover's death, the valiant Mother Chapdelaine dies, and the young Maria is torn with two tragic emotions. In a notable and beautifully written passage, the author describes the death-bed scene, with the father recalling the self-sacrifice and loyalty of Maria's mother, in face of all

hardships and privations, sharing her husband's hard, always difficult life. Maria, terrified, realizes this will be her life also, unless she goes away with Lorenzo Suprenant to the far-away States. She hears voices, or the voice of her conscience makes its appeal to her *habitant* blood; her ancestry calls; the old French names, the kindly farmers and the good friends of known worth, the simple pleasures of the Peribonka country, and the age-old call of the land, all make their appeal, and Maria understands. She marries Eutrope Gagnon, and walks the ancestral way, a true *habitant* woman of Peribonka. So the book ends.

But the real Maria Chapdelaine never married; we have visited her in Peribonka, and talked to her over a little table in her wayside tea house, the pretty, middle-aged, clear-skinned Mademoiselle Eva Bouchard who was the heroine of the greatest Canadian literary classic of our day. She does not speak English, but her brother, who was superintending the efforts of two lusty nephews in the driveway, speaks it fluently, and it was he who called up to the house for Mademoiselle Bouchard to come down, as we had messages for her. Thus we first saw Maria Chapdelaine walking briskly down the path, her crisp, spotlessly white apron whipping in the stiff breeze off the Peribonka. Crossing the road, she ushered us into the little tea room, and soon we were all leaning across the counter, sipping cool drinks and discussing the new version of the immortal story that was being made in Hollywood.

"But that, see you, Monsieur et Madame, it is of an

exaggeration. Of a so much love story so much the way of Hollywood, very grand, but for me, no, I do not like it."

"But the book, Mademoiselle, it is true to the life of the Peribonka?"

"But yes. All true, the hard work, the winter so cold, all true."

I wanted so much to ask if the love story was also true, but somehow one cannot rush into the little tea room at Peribonka and demand the life history of the courteous and delightful Eva Bouchard. But I would still like to know. The subject is being changed.

"Yes, Monsieur, the fête of which you read in the newspapers, it is to be here and in the garden of my house. See, I will show you."

We go out into the gusty freshness of the morning, across the road, under the trees on the farm-house lawn. The two nephews stop ditching, and one accompanies us; the other goes stolidly on with the job.

"Him," says Brother Bouchard, who has joined the procession, "he likes to work, always to work."

"What a gift," remarks Robin, enviously.

"A gift, truly, and of a usefulness on a farm," replies Brother Bouchard, with a twinkle in his dark eyes. "These boys are the sons of our sister, now dead, alas, and they live with my sister and me here on the farm."

"The sister with whom Louis Hémon boarded, Madame, all the time he was living and writing here. That is her house down the road, and there on Friday, the Ambassador de France and great gentlemen from Paris come

to the *fête champêtre* of opening the Louis Hémon Museum, in the house of my sister."

We sauntered down the road.

"See," said "Maria Chapdelaine", "there are now many more windows, for, see you, to make the window, it is the money, and when this house is built, the money there is none. Now, since the book of Louis is so great, the house, it is made more new, the relics are collected of his work, and on Friday come the *haute monde* to open the collection." Her voice was full of honest pride that the "*haute monde*" of literature and the kindred arts should be coming to do homage to the author of *Maria Chapdelaine*.

We felt that we must be holding up the progress of dinner, and realizing that the boy who liked work probably liked his food too, we started back to our car. On the way we learned that even the small children have their work on the Peribonka farms. A child is given a can and sent out into the potato fields. There he hand-picks potato bugs, dropping them into the can, and the can, carried carefully back to prove his zeal, is emptied on to the fire, and that is the end of the pestilential potato bug in the Lake St. John district.

After writing in Mademoiselle Maria Chapdelaine-Eva Bouchard's visitors' book, we bid the real heroine of a real book good-bye, and drove on towards Dolbeau.

It is fun to meet the heroine of a great book in the flesh, and we amused ourselves with the idea of meeting other famous fictional characters. For instance, Paul

Bunyan, the fabulous giant of the loggers, who seems to be a travelled sort of giant, because he crops up all over the States and Canada, credited with the most spectacular feats of strength. He and his famous team of giant oxen once harnessed the land about the Saguenay and, giving a mighty heave, entirely changed the geography of the district. Even so, Paul Bunyan was not pleased at the result, so, taking the oxen further north, he again harnessed them to a mountain. Cracking his five-mile long whip, he drove the oxen forward; a rending roar followed, and when the dust cleared away, there was Lac St. John, a water-hole where the mountain had been! I hoped we wouldn't meet him; an uncomfortable person to have about the place.

And then there was the Great Manitou, the God of the Indians, who brought the storms and thunder, and who was undoubtedly responsible for the earthquake at Les Eboulements in the sixteen-hundreds. An old story tells of the Manitou's anger at the encroaching white man, and how he pushed down the cliffs as a warning; but it was a vain effort, for the white people put the whole affair down to their own particular devils, and the Manitou got no credit at all! Perhaps if one were to meet the Manitou to-day, walking down the Indian Reserve trail at Point Blue, he would be an old, old Indian in a mackinaw coat,





with impenetrable black eyes looking back into age-old forest fastnesses, an eagle feather in his decrepit felt hat the only sign of lordship. We felt quite sentimental about the Manitou.

But what about the beautiful, worldly Angélique des Meloises, the villainess of Kirby's *Golden Dog*? If one met Angélique, perfumed, brocaded and powdered, flouncing out of the courtyard of her house in St. Louis Street, Quebec, would the Intendant's mistress disdain a look at one as she steps into Bigot's fine coach and rattles off over the cobblestones to a reception in the Chateau St. Louis? Supposing one saw Angélique, her plumed hat flying from her shoulders, riding out on the Charlesborg road one dark midnight, a fury of hate on her beautiful features, and a dagger in her hand!

Robin says he would clap on his velvet cloak, set spurs to his pawing charger and, curled, fair hair blowing about his trimly bearded face, give chase into the night.

I would hide in a ditch!

\*

\*

\*

Drifting along the white roads, all much the same in scenery, had an almost hypnotic effect. Eventually the spell was broken by an enticing peat-brown brook rushing in a white "chute" under a bridge. So we picnicked on a huge, flat rock, almost in midstream, reached by frantic leapings. Being allergic to leaps, I fell in a shallow, but very moist pool, later sitting on a hot rock, surrounded by assorted garments flapping from branches of the thick wil-

low trees that fringed the river. Fortunately, it was hot and sunny and there were no black flies!

Apparently there were no fish either. Eventually, we continued on our way towards Dolbeau.

In a large brick Monastery at Dolbeau lives a tall, handsome Trappist Father. The Trappists being a silent Order, are only allowed to talk at specified times, but this Trappist monk has a special dispensation to speak to visitors at the Monastery of La Trappe of Our Lady of Mistassini, Mistassini, the monk told us, being the Indian name for Lake St. John. The Monastery was founded about forty-five years ago, and is an agricultural brotherhood of the same kind as the monks at La Trappe, on Lake of Two Mountains, near Montreal. Again, as in the Lake of Two Mountains district, the Trappists have opened up the land, taught the farmers how best to get good crops, and, in the Lake St. John district, it was the monks who started the blueberry canning among the populace, which has grown into one of the recognized industries of the countryside. Beautiful model farmlands lie around the modern buildings and, as at Oka, the straw-hatted, white-robed monks can be seen working in the fields, pruning, cultivating, hoeing, harvesting bumper crops. The "fruits of the earth" are always plentiful where the monks of La Trappe are working, and Dolbeau is no exception. Our informant, the tall monk, paced to and fro, sandals slapping rhythmically on the floor.

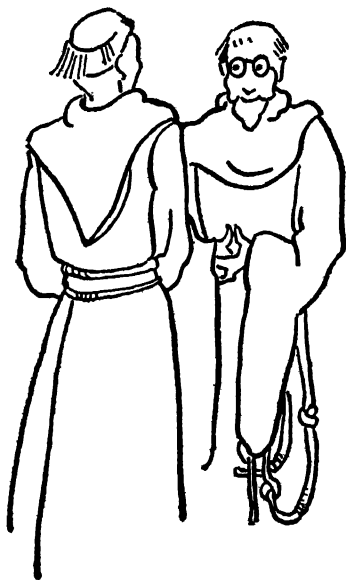


"Oh, no," he said cheerfully, "it's a dog's life out in the world to-day."

We were startled. "Why do you think that?"

"Well, for one thing, there is no time for anything. Always the rush, the hurry."

"That's very true," we agreed absolutely. "But isn't there rather too much time sometimes here?"



He laughed. "Never!" The sandals clopped-clopped faster over the floor. "It is very early to rise and to bed, with us; and more," he smiled to himself, "much more than an eight-hour day. There are no trade unions here, Monsieur." He addressed himself exclusively to Robin. "And, Sir, I repeat, it is a dog's life in the world of to-day."

And what, we thought, does this tall young man of religion know about the world of to-day?

"How long have you been here in La Trappe?"

"Eight years, and I thank God for the peace and ordered life. I assure you, Sir, I know something of which I speak." He smiled at Robin. "I was very much of the world before I became a Trappist."

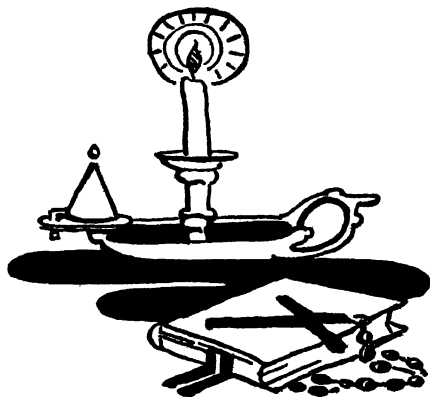
"And what," asked Robin, "were you before?"

"A saxophone player in a night club," was the startling reply.

This staggered us, and in the ensuing moment of surprise, we were ushered out into the courtyard, and seen firmly off by the handsome Trappist (ex-saxophonist) monk of Mistassini.

\* \* \*

There is a delightful tale told about the early days of this part of the Lake region. The Pulp Company had many workers and, naturally, most of them were French-Canadian Roman Catholics. The president and board of the firm felt it would be fitting to have a Church for their employees, and therefore donated a large sum of money to the very popular priest, who was a member of the board, as well as shepherd of the local flock. In time, the popular priest was able to preach from a fine pulpit in a real church, and all the people were proudly delighted. Shortly afterwards, the good Father fell heir to a vast sum of money from a distant relative, and there was more general rejoicing.



"Now," said the Company, "a time has come to build a

proper Protestant Church for the non-Catholic community."

"Ah yes," said the priest, looking at his fellow-board members.

"Undoubtedly we must have something better than the barn we now use," said the president.

"Perhaps," said a member slyly, "our fellow-member, the good Father, will give us a big donation for our Church?"

"Indeed, and I cannot do that," lamented the priest.

"We gave very handsomely from our Protestant pockets for *your* Church," said the other directors.

"True, true. If only I could give you something I would rejoice. But money to build a church, that I cannot possibly give. Never."

There was a weighty silence.

"We cannot stay on in that old barn," said the president, firmly. "It is a disgrace."

The priest looked up. "What are you going to do with the barn?" he asked.

"As soon as we can have services elsewhere, it will be pulled down."



"Ah," said the priest, "yes, it is a very bad eyesore, a dirty, useless, rotting mass," added the priest, heatedly. "A fire hazard, a danger to life, and," he banged the table, "a disgrace to the whole community. And," he continued, softly, "I will give five thousand dollars to have it pulled down immediately."

Everywhere about the lake, the green pasture lands, the growing crops and potato fields alternate with the newly broken land, great piles of stumps burning among roughly turned black soil, the blue smoke rising as a signal that man has wrested another acre from the wilderness. The ploughed patches, symmetrical designs of undulating stripes running to the horizon, a rich brown promise of lush harvests to come, shouted aloud the saga of the *habitant* farmer.

"Land of our own,  
Land for our sons,  
Land for our children's children,  
Unto the generations of all time"

The lushness of all the countryside in this, the harvest month, impressed us, tall grass, tall oats, even especially tall masses of goldenrod and fireweed fringing the road. White, high-behinded ducks swimming in a limpid backwater; herds of pinkish-brown cows chewing contentedly on every side, and bright pink pigs looking like the old-fashioned china mantel ornaments, reflected in blue looking-glass ponds. So Lake St. John looked to us that perfect August morning, as we bowled along the road under a pale blue sky trimmed with cotton-wool clouds.

In a strip of rough land, the road ran between uncleared bush and we slowed down to look at a tiny chipmunk and discovered a run-over skunk! We left. Some days later we again passed that way, and the poor run-over skunk was still in the road, and it was still obvious to all passers-by that it was there.

One day, leaving St. Joseph d'Alma, we went fishing on the Peribonka. Arriving at the prescribed spot, we found that our Indian guide had departed. A skeleton of white birch sapling that had held up his teepee, and a holed bucket were all that remained of his camp, unless one counted a pile of empty tin cans beside the trail. A nice commentary on the modern Indian on the fringes of the wild!

Apparently the tribes come in the summer to the Reserve, camping in and about Point Blue Reservation, collecting supplies, before going off for the northern winter into the backlands to trap and hunt, in much the same way as did their forefathers. Our guide had reverted to type, and meanwhile, we gazed at the old bucket and peeled bits of white bark off the tent poles, as we wondered what to do.

The sound of the Peribonka River falling over rocks lured us down a forest trail that turned out to be infested with a million mosquitoes and a pink cow. As to the latter, we could not imagine where she came from, but as to the mosquitoes, they came from innumerable backwaters of the river below, which, with miles of sand banks, lay between us and the fishable waters. Back we

all trudged, and at one time I killed five skeeters with one slap on my bare wrist. Later we came upon an unpainted frame house, with four windows, a fly-screen door, a nasty-looking yellow dog, with an outside oven. One of the party wanted to take a photo of the oven, but the yellow dog thought otherwise. A woman sat rocking to and fro, to and fro, monotonously, behind one window, her face a grey blank, while a crawling baby pushed its nose against the bulging screen door. Three other young children ran into the barn as we passed, hiding in the hay. We waved but these people were shy and suspicious; bright button eyes peeped out of cracks, but no grubby little paw waved in response, and the eternal rocking never wavered as we drove away. We called the pioneer shack "The Cow's Home," and it seemed at the end of the trail at the end of everything.

Passing a wayside Shrine, we saw a new device upon the shaft of the cross. A rudely carved skull and cross-bones painted a bony white made a grisly symbol, particularly as one of the cars suddenly shot off the road into a deep ditch. Robin and I came up to find the usual crowd assembled, apparently out of nowhere, as the long white road had appeared empty to the horizon. This crowd was a variation on the town crowd, in that most of it was horses. Two horse buggies, each driven by a farmer, one accompanied by his wife, had drawn up at the roadside. Attached to each buggy tail-board by a halter was a mare, and following each mother horse was a frightened colt, all legs and rolling, white eyes. Our car



was drawn up behind the ditched two-seater, and into this lively setting charged a huge red truck, laden high with rough lengths of mill wood. All the humans got out among the jumping horses, and a small boy leaped from the top of the wood truck, falling flat on his face in the dust. We all talked at once, nobody listening at all, but Robin produced a tow rope, and the red truck produced a willing driver, and in no time the car was on the road again. The truck drove off amidst expressions of gratitude, and when the dust had cleared, we found ourselves alone, two cars on a long, white road, with a cloud of dust on each horizon, one full of truck and the other full of horses and buggies. We saw a number of horse shows about the various villages, numbers of beautiful mares and strong, long-legged colts, but could never find out exactly what the gatherings were about.

Finally we picnicked by the Peribonka, lazing away a perfect afternoon to the sound of running water. About the first of the twilight, the sound of lusty singing joined the water music, and round the river bend came two heavily loaded York boats, full of loggers. They passed waving and shouting, as perfect an early Canadian picture as I ever hope to see—the *voyageurs* of old, the fur traders off on the Traders' route to the great west; the hard-living, hard-working, swashbuckling *voyageur*, in his sturdy, high-prowed York boat, singing up and down the rivers of history to-day as yesterday. What a picture, as the boats shot past on the swift current and round the bend to the camp above the rapids!

The great thought of a lazy afternoon was supplied by the girl from New York who always smoked a pipe. "How far," she said, "does a little dog go into the wood?"

No one answered. She puffed a blue cloud of smoke.

"Half-way," she said, "because after that he is coming out"

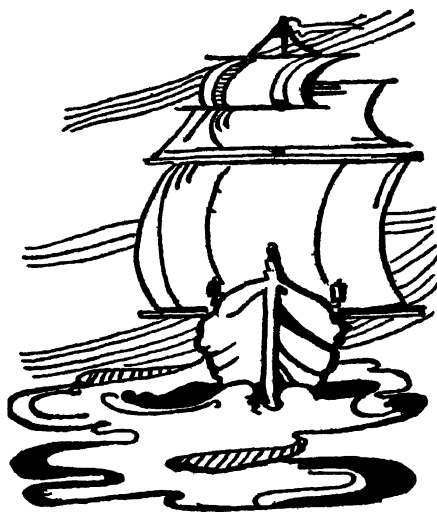
No fish were caught, mainly because no one fished, but we all ate and slept the hot afternoon away, and by the time the evening rise of fish might have been expected, we came home, rather than miss dinner at our hotel, and that was that—a perfect afternoon's fishing. Usually someone spoils it all by wanting to catch fish!

Always throughout our visits green lushness and pink etceteras continued with the miles we travelled, and our exclamations took on a uniformity of expression that was monotonous. Having remarked every mile for the last forty, "What wonderful farming land!" or "What lush crops!" we ran out of conversation, and just drove and drove along straight roads through miles more of wonderful farms" and "lush crops", and so, one day, we arrived in Roberval.

## PATCH 19

### GROSGRAIN—THEN AND NOW

**B**EFORE ROBERVAL there are more lush fields and new-turned brown land. Newer settlements dotted with one-roomed shacks next to huge modern barns, alternating with green acres stretching away to the distant line of trees, where the defeated forest still stands on the edge of civilization. As a backdrop, misty blue hills lower here than at the River coast, and at the crossroads, a



sign saying "St. Thomas Didyme". The whole almanac of Saints must be in use in Quebec Province; all the Saints known to the ordinary mortal plus St. Thomas Didyme, St. Catiste de Kilkenny and St. Louis de Ha! Ha! are lending their patronage to parishes of the province, and doing it very well. Who was St. Blaise? And what did St. Hilarion do?

With that charming north shore village under his care,

he must have been a nice Saint. We nearly stopped to ask the two priests who, waving black shovel hats to and fro, sat bare-headed in the shade of a high wall in Normandin. The old man smoked a pipe, his wrinkled face a map of his life, homely, good-natured and peaceful, while the young man was hawk-like and vividly alive, the all-engulfing deep peace of the countryside not yet upon him. But we did not stop to question, and soon left the village behind. Still more new broken land, acres and miles of it, and a tiny one-roomed shack made of tar paper, with a young woman and two children standing outside. A man is coming across from the barn, carrying empty feed pails that jangle as he stretches over to take the hand of his son, who toddles up to meet him—a new family on new land. They are lucky young people, for they have two fine horses and a colt that live sumptuously in the huge barn. Come next year it will be filled with home-grown grain, like the Couteau's next along, who have much good grain and a cow as well. Come next year a cow may well be added to the two horses and the colt, and there will be a new baby also. And what more could a young *habitant* Quebecer wish? Unless it was one of these new radio boxes that disturb the peace of an evening, as Grand-père says, but Grand-père is of a great oldness, and has no liking for the very new!

St. Felicien (I wonder what especially spiritual undertaking canonized this Saint?) is a remarkable village in two ways. It has the longest covered bridge imaginable, that echoes rumblingly as one bowls over the wide

road-boards, and a small park practically filled with statuary; fountains, miniature waterways, bird houses, bronze fishermen, and two angels blowing everlasting trumpets, vie in interest with a Christus over-topped by a halo filled with large electric lights, and a stumpy black cannon stands below the sacred outstretched hands. Near a model steamboat, a red-painted metal pelican spouts a stream of water over a pond, at the end of which a model sailing ship swings against the pelican-induced tide. Among low



bushes a model windmill whirls its sails in the breeze off the River, while two extremely bored, white-plaster lions guard the entrance to this small boys' paradise-of-a-park. At one end, on the newest of a row of bird houses, sits a blasé brown bird, utterly unshaken by all

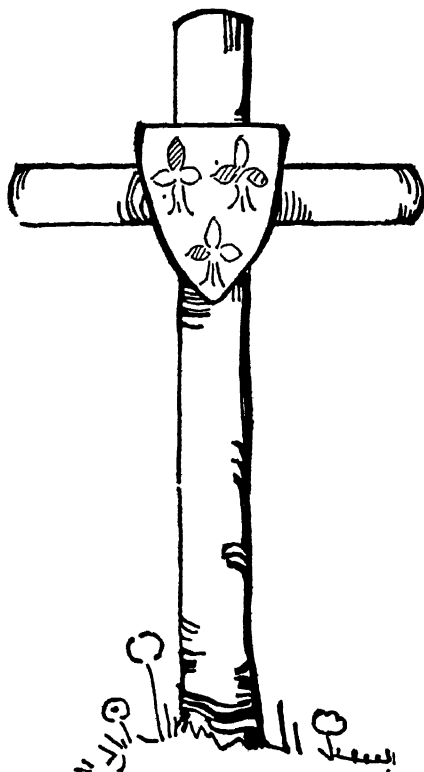
the variegated surplusage spread out below, while most unlikely of all, the Beethoven Minuet in G, played with all the stilted charm of its period, floats out from a cottage across the road and echoes among the conglomerate statuary. The pianist repeated a passage of the Minuet, then launched into—of all amazements!—a theme, with many variations, on "Scatterbrain"!

Rather dazed with the whole amazing set-up of St. Felicien (surely a Saint of diversified interests!) we drove slowly away, followed by unthinkable convolutions of

swing music scatterbraining about the sound waves.

Roberval is a go-ahead new town named in honour of an enterprising business man of the early fifteen hundreds. His business was not particularly straight, and the man was both cruel and crooked, but the name of Sieur de Roberval is amongst the earliest on the roll of New France, and therefore is perpetuated in the Kingdom of Saguenay. Sieur Roberval was a nobleman of Picardy, and must have had some pull, for when he left France for the New World, he possessed a charter from the King, naming him Lord of Norembega, Viceroy, and Lieutenant-General in Canada, Hochelaga, Saguenay, Newfoundland, Belle Isle, Carpunt, Labrador, the Great Bay, and Baccalaos—a wonderful collection of names, but none exactly the right one, which, as things turned out, was Unscrupulous-Adventurer-in-All-Things. The alleged objects of Roberval's enterprise were discovery, colonization, and the conversion of the Indians, pious enough objects that sounded better than the roll call of the ships' companies that eventually sailed out of St. Malo. Most of these crew men were from the prisons, murderers and thieves, whom France donated to the thrifty Roberval free of charge, provided he removed the lot to the other spheres of uselessness. This reduced the overhead greatly, but did not add to the comfort or efficiency of the expedition. Add to this a motley company of adventurers, soldiers, gamblers and some few women, and the picture, even for those unsqueamish times, is unpropitious.

Into this unlikely setting steps the figure of Jacques



Cartier. Politics being what they were and governments what they should not have been, the great explorer had been unable to get any more financial assistance towards further voyages to Canada. Kicking his heels and eating his heart out for five years, while his stout ships rotted at the quay, Cartier was at last given a chance to sail again into the New World as Captain-General of Roberval's expedition. Needs must when explora-

tion is in the blood, so Cartier, in spite of his dislike of the whole outfit, accepted the proposition. Trouble began in St. Malo, when Roberval's gang of cut-throats mutinied, and it was then decided that Cartier should sail alone, and Roberval would follow with supplies later in the year. The long and the short of it was that Roberval got very cold feet as winter approached, and did nothing about meeting Cartier's ships, the result being that the

wretched sailors and few settlers, stranded somewhere near Quebec, were forced to spend the long winter alone, frozen, sick and almost starving. In the spring, Cartier upped anchor and sailed homeward with what remained of the would-be colony. In a nice, snug Newfoundland harbour, he found Sieur de Roberval on the way out to "Canada, Hochelaga, Saguenay, Newfoundland, Belle Isle, Carpunt, Labrador, the Great Bay, Baccalaos" and points west. Cartier said what he thought; Roberval was hurt, Cartier said some more and, very wisely, sailed off at dead of night before Roberval's schemes for stealing his ship and some samples of supposed gold in the holds could materialize, and eventually arrived back in France. Roberval went on up the St. Lawrence without a twinge of conscience or a backward thought either for Cartier and his starving crew or for the unfortunate girl he had in the meantime cast away on the Isle of Demois. For some unexplained reason, Marguerite, Roberval's niece, was on board his ship, and so, unknown to Uncle, was her lover. When this was discovered, the irate relative ordered Marguerite put ashore on a haunted island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Her faithful nurse stayed with her mistress. She and two old muskets were landed with Marguerite, after which ample provision, the gallant Sieur de Roberval sailed on to further glories. But he did not know that the lover had jumped overboard, swum ashore, and was with his lady-love among the demons of the island. This amazing story is one of the most cruelly cold-blooded episodes in the history of the New World, and came to an





end two years and five months later. Indians, braving the demons, which were mainly huge white bears, rescued Marguerite from that appalling place, the only survivor, her nurse, her lover, and her baby having died and been buried in shallow, unblessed graves among the rough vegetation of the fog-bound isle. Possibly, being accustomed to Roberval, his niece found legendary demons and white bears quite companionable, but however that may be, she was unhurt and absolutely sane.

When she returned to France, she related her amazing story to the Queen at Court—a tale that did Roberval no good, but perpetuated his name among the more non-illustrious figures of the early Canadian scene.

This town, called after Roberval, is very neat and modern in thought, from the tremendous road improvement scheme that is in process to the highly efficient hospital on the outskirts. A fine



big building, it is run by nuns and serves an extensive district. Its many sun-room windows overlook the lake and a stonemason's works. One can choose one's own gravestone direct from the hospital. All modern conveniences!

Farther on the road improvements had not quite reached that stage of excellence that is necessary for locomotion, and two of the huge dumping trucks were stuck in their own mud; disgusted drivers dug out massive double-tired wheels amid the delighted laughter of the road gang who stood about making pungent remarks and doing nothing. He who chucked mud got stuck with it that time!

From Roberval, on another occasion we went on to Point Blue, the Indian Reserve on the banks of Lake St. John. The lake seems a huge, flat silver plate, and the Reserve was strangely uninteresting. Except for an Indian out fishing in a scarlet canoe, the place was deserted, and even the fisherman slept, judging by the angle of his hat. It was a warm, lazy afternoon, which accounted for the lack of Indians in action at Point Blue, and also for the lack of ambition that prevented us from doing or seeing anything particular on the Reservation. The Hudson's Bay store was closed, and the blankets inside the window looked extremely woolly and hot. Nobody wants a fourpoint blanket on a July afternoon! In spite of the store being historic, a landmark, and the first building in the region, we did not move from the car to inspect it. Instead we parked under some trees and watched the

Indian fisherman sleeping, and wondered what Father Jean de Quen thought of all this when he came plodding fearlessly through the wilderness in 1647. The spark of religious zeal would vie with the light of exploration, his mind divided between an intense religious fervour for the conversion of the heathen and that very human wish to know just what, exactly, is around the corner. At one end of Lake St. John he planted the first seed of Christianity in the Kingdom of Saguenay, and near L'Action a tiny Chapel was erected. Then de Quen's exploratory curiosity got the better of him and he continued on and over the lake far beyond, to north and west, preaching, mapping, adventuring into lands that even to this day are almost unknown.

So the afternoon passed in lazy peacefulness. The Indian slept on; a small breeze awoke among the willows, and suddenly a strident little bell banged out from the tower of the near-by Chapel. Angelus floated across the still waters, and galvanized both the Indian fisherman and ourselves into action. He pushed a broad paddle into the silvery waters and shot off towards a hut from the chimney of which a trickle of wood smoke began to rise.

"Supper!" we said together, and made off at high speed for St. Joseph d'Alma and the Company House hospitality. Just as we were leaving the Point Blue Reservation, an old, old Indian in a red and black checked shirt above faded blue pants came out of a shack, putting on a straw hat with a feather stuck into the band. He raised a gnarled mahogany hand in greeting as we passed,

but there was no flicker of expression in his age-old eyes.

"Do you suppose—?" I whispered.

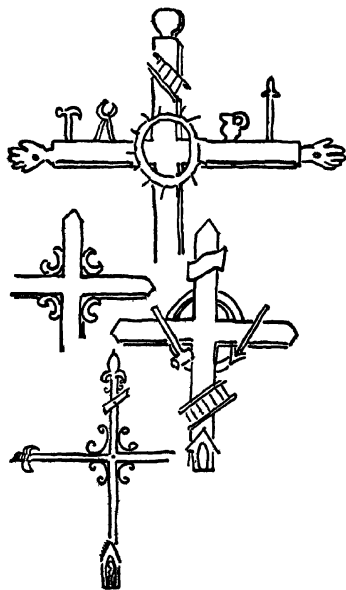
"Yes," said Robin. "Undoubtedly, the Retired Manitou."



## SURGICAL GAUZE—THE HEALING ARTS

A WAY through the Limilou district of Lower Town runs a long street called after Bishop St Vallier. It is an atmospheric sort of street, very French, very narrow, and very full of everything, cars, cats, children, vegetable barrows, and busy housewives washing steps. Full, in fact, of life.

In the strait-laced Bishop St Vallier's day, this long road was a winding trail crossing the meadows below the cliffs, towards the St. Charles flats. Here, close to the river fishing, and among lush green fields, the Recollect Fathers built their Monastery. Even in St Vallier's time the Monastery was fairly old, having been built in the dawn of the French Colonial era, while Champlain was still alive, and seventy-five years from 1620 until St Vallier's day was indeed old for those times. One day the good priest was walking along the trail towards the Recollect foundation, debating the problem of the sick and poor, of the growing town—what to do about those infamous rascals, the *coureurs de bois*, spending their lives in riotous living and wild adventure, and then, old, sick, and useless, coming



back to the towns, to eke out a precarious livelihood on the street corners. Another problem was the indigent, God-fearing poor, who, through no fault of their own, were destitute in Quebec. The good Bishop was much exercised. He enters the tall gates of the Recollect Monastery, and has an idea. Many months later that idea came to fruit, and the Recollects surrendered their beloved "*monastère*" (one wonders under what pressure)



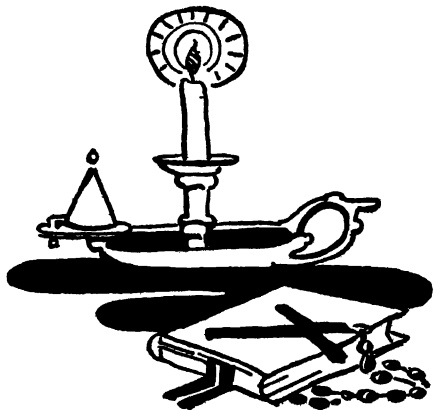
to the Sisters of the Hotel Dieu. These White Sisters came to start the General Hospital under special command from Bishop St. Vallier, and from that day until the present, the Sisters of St. Augustin have conducted a hospital sanctuary for the poor, the friendless and aged sick of Quebec.

Long before the earliest brown-robed Recollect chose the

spot for building, that inquisitive mariner, Jacques Cartier, had noticed the excellence of the St. Charles flats, and on the first voyage up the River in 1535 he pitched his camp near the present General Hospital grounds.

Cartier was en route to Cathay at the time, but instead of finding that fabulous Chinese dream-city, he found Quebec. On the flats below the steep cliff, he also found the Canadian winter closing in on his ships. The Indians had been most friendly, but, taking no chances, Cartier made his men, the crews of the three little ships that now lay frozen into the ice of the St. Charles River, build up stockades and mount the ship's guns, just as a hint to the natives not to try any monkey tricks.

Inside this stockade the worst of all pioneer enemies descended upon the company—scurvy. Soon half the men were down with the foul disease, many died, almost all had signs of the sickness. Cartier was frantic with anxiety, and the uselessness of any remedy of which he knew, made things even more depressing. One day, in desperation, he gathered the few men who could still walk, and went out to the little Shrine



that had been made among some maple trees. Here, having no priest, Cartier himself read prayers and asked for Divine help in the horrible circumstances. Nothing happened, and, coming as a further sign of heavenly disapproval, one of the officers, de Rougemont, died that very



night. But Jacques Cartier was a man ahead of his times, and at that particular period the Renaissance learning was beginning to be felt. Science was coming out of the darkness again. Overcoming his inherited medieval scruples, thinking perhaps of the work of the great Leonardo da Vinci in anatomical research, Cartier took his clasp-knife in hand and, at dead of night, did an autopsy on the body of de Rougemont. His findings were gruesome. Although he now knew much of the effects of scurvy, the cure, or prevention, of the disease seemed as far from his knowledge as ever. It is not difficult to imagine that Cartier, the seaman, the explorer, the outdoor man, was somewhat shaken by his researches of the night-time, and felt the need of air and solitude to think over the whole situation. Perhaps his inbred superstitions and religious scruples fought with the spirit of new learning and the driving wish for new knowledge that this age produced in its children—the age of the great explorers, scientists, artists, rogues, pirates and statesmen, producing such opposites as Henry VIII, of matrimonial memory, and Calvin, the religious reformer. Almost every outstanding figure of that time displayed the inconsistencies of the divided outlook, and Cartier was no exception.

As he walked along the narrow winter trail beside the River, pondering on the autopsy and its results, an Indian stepped silently out from the woods. Walking beside Cartier he told him in simple sign language the cure for scurvy. Take spruce, fresh and green, said the Indian benefactor, boil it and drink large quantities of the pun-

gent infusion, and soon your men will be whole again. This spruce drink became so popular with the scurvy-spotted sailors, and wrought such miracles, that Cartier records in his log that a tree as big as a French oak was boiled and drunk. When spring came sweeping up the River, as it does almost overnight in upper Canada, the sailors were well and more than ready to sail away upon the ice-free waters. The idea of Cathay was given up in favour of a trip home to France, and off down the St. Lawrence, went the tan-sailed ships. One vessel, the tiny *Petite Hermione*, had to be left behind as there were no men to sail her, and she remained, a strange monument



to the first white dead of America. In the same way it may be said that Cartier was the first surgeon to practise on this continent, and that without a licence!

So the hospital tradition started early on the St. Charles, and Bishop St. Vallier only continued in the medical footsteps of the first River explorer. As time went on, he took such interest in the moral welfare of the assorted flock under his charge, that the windows of his palace in Quebec were often smashed by the stones of the ungodly, whom he had rebuked, and threatened with hell

fire of a peculiar warmth. The wilder young men refused to stand for the restrictions imposed by the stern churchman, and the reckless ranks of the *coureurs de bois* were much enlarged by rebel Quebecers and the life of the wilderness became wilder than ever. All these things led to the recall of St. Vallier to France, but even there he withstood the obvious hints of his King that he resign, and the next year saw the Bishop landing again in the shadow of the cliffs of Quebec. For forty years in all he served his see and at the end of that time he had gained a reputation for saintly asceticism, and a place in the hearts of the people generally; but mainly in the hearts of the poor and sick, who had found safe harbour in the General Hospital. This institution, created into a separate Order of nuns, was the main interest in the ageing Bishop's life, and in death he lies in a simple, self-prepared tomb in the beautiful Chapel of his hospital.

In the long airy wards to-day the sunlight is thrown up from aged wooden floors, scrubbed to the tone of rich parchment, reflecting onto white ceilings undulating slightly with age. Deep windows, between the neatly regimented beds, give pictures of the willows and the tiny inner cloister, and in the beds, white-covered, the old, the sick, and the friendless of Quebec, peacefully, on the far shore of life, await the turning of the tide.

A train stormed past as I left the main building, causing a slight stir among the old men sitting on the shallow steps. One waved his stumpy pipe towards the sunken

cutting through which the locomotive trailed a stream of smoke.

"She's late," he said. "One minute, by gar!"

"How know you, Philemon?"

"Look you there." He waved the pipe. "By the sun on the tombstone in the Protestant Plot. At the letter "R" it is one minute late." He smoked on in peace. Even Time goes by gravestones, when the tide is ebbing.

Driving one day along the St Vallier road we saw, tucked away beneath the cliff, a little grotto. We called it Little Shrine Sous-le-Cap (Under the Cliff), but I do not know its real name. There it is, a false cave, hollowed out of the sheer rock, with a vivid blue Virgin, a chubby Child on Her arm, gazing tranquilly out on an intranquil industrial district.

A sad-faced woman comes up the steep hill to the steps of the grotto, leans over and places a tiny bunch of pansies at the feet of the Virgin, then kneels, telling her beads, quite undisturbed by the yells of two gutter-snipes who run around the edge of the ornamental fountain that decorates one side of the Shrine, throwing orange peel into the muddy water. To the right, at the end of a broad path stands a stone altar, and two nuns with baskets of bright pink paper roses stand consulting on the steps. Presently the younger Sister climbs carefully up onto the flat stone slab, hands down the heavy brass vases, takes out a little broom and, walking slowly across, sweeps the long altar free from the Limolou dust. A checked duster comes out of some capacious unseen pocket, and the simple task

goes on. Behind the altar a screen of young poplars shivers in a sudden breeze, and a black cloud comes slowly up over the far blue Laurentian horizon. The nuns are too busy to notice this ominous sign and they place the last filled vase, brilliantly pink and artificial, upon the spotless altar, kneel a moment in prayer before going sedately off down the hill, their thick-soled shoes clopp-clopping on the rough stones. Some small children are drawing out a hop-scotch in the sand before the grotto, their shrill voices echoing back from the damp vault, as two girls, tawdry and unmistakable, come at the last and kneel at the little rail with closed eyes, their crudely painted lips moving soundlessly. Life goes on in all its phases before the Little Grotto Sous-le-Cap, and here religion is part and parcel of everyday life, not some special, tip-toeing, solemnity wrapped in mystery.

The first big spots of rain were falling as we went down the cobbled hill, and, looking back, we were sad for the wasted work of the two nuns—the pink paper roses were dripping slowly onto the unprotected altar making pink puddles that trickled slowly down onto the steps. The hop-scotch children huddled into the protection of the cave, jostling the plaster skirts of the serene blue Virgin, and the shrill whistles of Limolou tore a swath of sound across the crowded tenements as we drove away along a rain-washed St. Vallier Street.

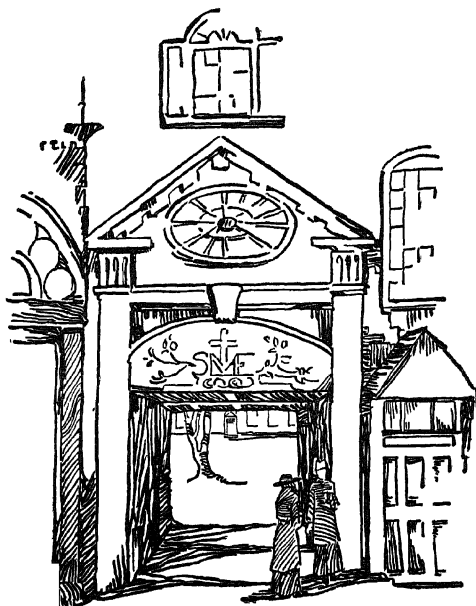
## AMERICAN CLOTH—QUEBEC INTERLUDE

AS ALREADY mentioned, everyone talks to an artist. Put down a stool, get out some paper, and anything coloured in the way of paints, then wait for adventure to befall. On this occasion I was perched on top of the steps of the Presbyterian Church of St Andrews, in the welcome shade of the staunch foursquare building. The steps are steep, and as I was on the top landing the people in the street immediately below mostly failed to notice anyone sitting quietly above their unconscious heads. I had been there some time that very hot morning, and was beginning to wonder if a sketch would be completed without any interruptions, when a voice hailed me from below.

"Hi!" said the voice, loudly

"Hi yourself," said I, absently, being in the middle of a water-colour wash, a tricky thing to leave. By the time I had finished, a hot-faced woman in a more salt-than-the-sea cruising costume was beside me.

"So you're an artist," she said accusingly.



"That's me," said I, with bravado. She looked at the sketch

"What I like is more colour," she remarked "Churches?" she said, "do you know anything about churches?"

"A little. What church do you want to see?"

"All of them."

I digested this remark. "Oh. There are quite a lot in Quebec, you know."

"You're telling me! Why, I've been in eleven churches this morning."

"Oh," I said, feebly. "Have you been to the Laval Chapel?"

"Now, where's that?"

"In the corner of the entrance courtyard of Laval Seminary, to the left of the Basilica."

"Oh sure, I did the Basilica. Say, have you seen the

men taking the decorations down in that church? Slick, they have them on kinda pulleys and a man in the gallery lets the string down, and another fella unhooks the velvet drapes and things and then the other fella pulls up the pulley—well, it's slick." She paused,



"Yes, sure, I did the Chapel you said "

"I suppose you've been in Holy Trinity, the Anglican Cathedral?"

"Sure That's where there's loges for the King of England to sit "

"What about the Church of the White Sisters?" I asked hopefully

"Sure Saw that early this morning " She tried the doors of St. Andrews, and found them all locked She turned "Look," she said, "d'you think they use washing machines?"

"Who?"

"Why, those White Sisters They certainly must have big washing days, with all those white clothes, and then some If they don't have washing machines, that's tough, but I guess it's tough anyway Perpetual prayer and all that, and needlework and never going out to a show " She paused, dabbing at her face with a Kleenex I was fascinated. What pearl of thought would come next? She walked the length of the terrace and craned around the far corner of the building

"Not so good, it's shut up Well, I'm not going to let this two-by-four church spoil my record I'll keep on coming





around until I get in. D'you know what I said to Si'?"

"What did you say?"

"Si'!" I says, "I'm gonna see every church in this burg; you can look around the city in a rubber-neck bus if you want, but me, well, I like the smell in these here churches, and they're educational. And Si' says, 'So's battlefields,' he says; 'but churches are real cultural,' I says; 'look at all the gold paint inside churches, and the nifty statues.' 'Well,' Si' says, 'ain't there statues all over the city? Look,' he says, 'at that there statue.' And cannu-guess what it was?"

I could not.

"This'll slay you,"—she paused dramatically. " 'There, up on top of that doorway,' Si' says, 'there's a statue.' And it was a cut-out picture of a kinda hump-back dog lying down near a bone. 'Now,' I says, 'Si', 'I says, 'have I come on this See Canada Cruise just to see a cut-out statue of a dog eating bones? I have not,' I says, and left him goofing at that old dog." She paused, but only momentarily. "Educational, that's me. Churches." She rattled the doors again and looked through the huge old key-hole. "I gonna get in if it slays me. Say, what's that church a ways down there?"

"That is an empty church; perhaps that doesn't count?" I suggested.

She seemed a little exercised over this situation.

"No-o"—she sounded doubtful. "But," cheering up, "how about that tower way over there?" In the distance

a knobby steeple poked out from surrounding houses. "What's that?" she asked.

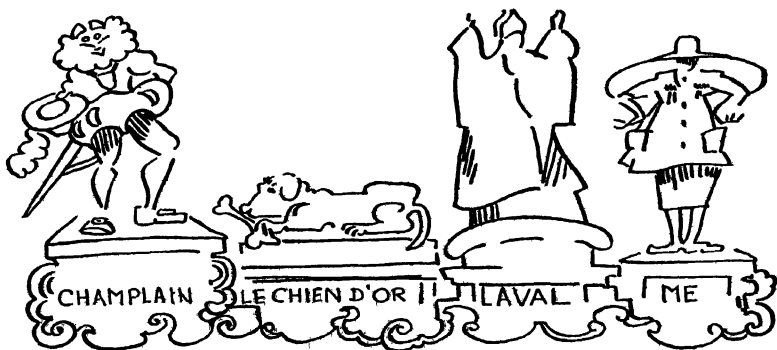
"I'm afraid I don't know."

"Guess I'll go find out. Good-bye," she shouted from the bottom of the steps. "You gonna be here long?"

"Some time yet," I replied, looking at a blotchy, tide-marked water-colour.

"O.K. then. I'll be back," she shouted from half-way down the street. "Be seeing you!" and disappeared from view.

At that moment a *calèche* rumbled down from the Place d'Armes, bumping over the uneven blocks. The driver stopped somewhat up the road and began his sales talk about Quebec, and St. Andrew's Church in particular. "Saint Andrew, the Patron of ze Scot peopooles, ees ver' good Saint. There is his Church, ver' fine, ver' *ancien*', what we call historic site—". He spotted me. "And there," he waved a proprietary hand, "there is another," he said, and added later, "ver' famous artist of which Kebec is she so justly proud." He passed down the road, leaving myself and the other historic sites in the peace of the centuries.



Thus it was that I felt strangely akin to the bust of the King of France in Notre Dame des Victoire Square when next I wandered into that entrancing little backwater. I had saluted Champlain, the Golden Dog and Bishop Laval on the way down, and now looked tolerantly at the be-wigged features of the Grand Louis. After all, we historic sites must stand together.

The bust standing in the little square is of that particular Louis, King of France, who looked upon himself as Monarch of All He Surveyed. This proved to be the truth, but he was so short-sighted that he failed to "survey" the distant Colony of New France until it was too late. The long-sighted British were in possession by the time that Louis got his glasses on. The bust of Louis is now the general alpine training ground for the hundreds of gamin children out of Sous le Cap and Sault au Matelot Streets. That day at least twelve grubby, yelling children crawled about the rigid ringlets and over the frilled bronze chest of Le Roi de France. How that fastidious egotist would have shuddered had his downtrodden people ever approached thus near to the Kingly Presence! But it continues to show how dangerous it is to allow oneself to become a public memorial at any stage of history.

Only once during the daytime have I seen the centre-piece of Notre Dame Square without its squirming mass of children, and that was when, in a fit of utmost aberration, I gave a candy to a small, semi-clean toddler on the steps of Notre Dame des Victoires. In almost next to no

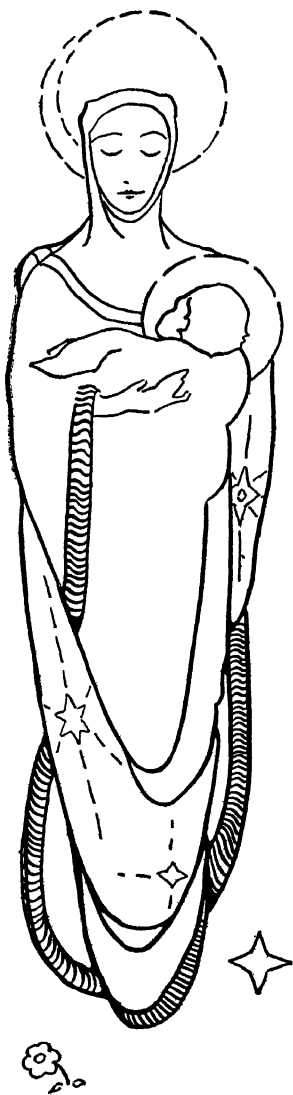
time, Louis was deserted, and the juvenile populace of Lower Town hurled themselves upon me. Dirty little paws grabbed at the candy, and at me. The woolly black nigger tot took the eye, because her hair was in curl papers. Rather a surplusage of permanent wave! The child that really caused my undignified retreat had eczema all over its grasping little hands. I dropped the box, and drove off quickly. On that particular day, the faint Perfume of the Past was noticeably absent, but the far from faint perfume of a September day in Lower Town's narrow spaces was very apparent indeed.

The Church of Notre Dame des Victoires has been rebuilt and restored on many different occasions, and has lost some of its intrinsic atmosphere in the process. But it is the oldest standing Church in Quebec City, having been built in 1688, when it was dedicated to St. Genevieve. Later, in 1690, the name was changed, and the little Church became Notre Dame de la Victoire to commemorate the defeat of the English Fleet under Admiral Phipps. The British were taking a great interest in the French possessions in Canada, and made a second attempt to take Quebec in 1711. When the Fleet, under Admiral Walker was wrecked on Egg Island during a terrible storm, the devout congregation of Notre Dame saw in this "Act of God" special protection from Heaven, and, as a thank-offering for their deliverance, renamed the Church Notre Dame des Victoires. So it has remained the Lady of the plural victories. In the interval, however, the British tried again, this time under General Wolfe, and this time

the little Church was almost destroyed by shell fire from the British guns across the River at Levis. The fact that the Upper Town was only partially damaged, while the Lower Town was flattened, was due to the fact that the guns could only just reach across the River, and it was an exceptional shot that landed on top of the cliffs. Over a hundred and fifty houses were destroyed by a fire that resulted from the bombardment, but the bare walls of the little Notre Dame Church still stood. Five years later, by which time Canada was a British possession, rebuilding began, and the present Church, still retaining its name, rose from the ruins on its old, historic site. Even though that name was a slight slur on the war prowess of the British, the new rulers made no effort to change it. In fact, throughout the entire years of occupation and settling under new rule, no attempt was ever made to interfere with the existing religious order, and the terms of the Capitulation of Quebec were adhered to. In many cases, the British rebuilt the damaged churches, as in the case of the Ursuline Chapel in Upper Town, and it is possible that this one fact may have had more bearing on the later history of Canada than much diplomacy and statesmanship. A devout people remembered this, among other things, when only a few years later, they fought side by side, the French and the British, in defence of their Canada against an invading army.

In 1888 Notre Dame des Victoires was restored, and to me that restoration was unfortunate, for in many ways it has taken from the atmosphere of the old place. There

are some pictures, interesting and very quaint, of the two marine disasters that gave the Church its name. In one, remarkably symmetrical, curly waves, blown by two fat cherubs, dash full-rigged ships onto sharp rocks, and in the other, the gloom is so intense that the fleet of the invaders hadn't a chance. The Rubens canvas, "L'Elevation en Croix", is to the left as one enters. Can it really be a genuine old master? I asked so often that increasing unpopularity made it diplomatic to ask no more, but it still worries me. It is almost impossible to think that the same hand that painted the sublime "Descent from the Cross" in Antwerp Cathedral brushed on the sometimes uncertain strokes of this "Rubens". The "Van Loo" over a side altar is impressive, and carries something of the religious feeling of the time into the more mechanical present, and the delightful, fat cherubs, blowing hugely all about the Church,



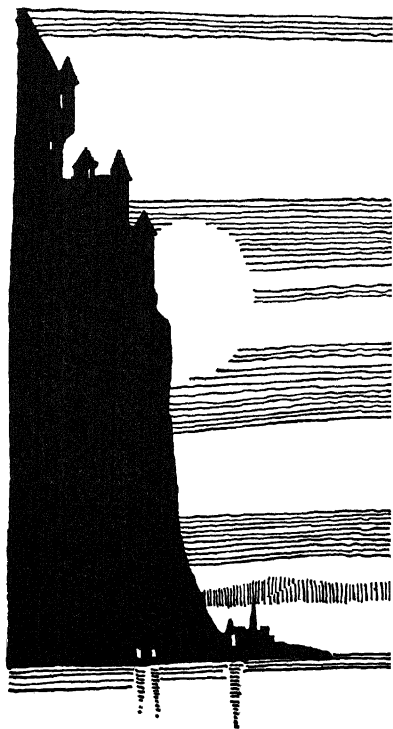
give the feeling of those historic gales that saved Quebec, and gave this Church two aliases.

The old Church sleeps in its cobbled square, a refuge and help to the simple, pious people of the little streets, a playground on its shallow steps for the children, and a sanctuary in time of trouble for their parents. Of all the things inside that building, perhaps the most touching are the scraps of life pinned onto the board at the main entrance. On a tiny, dirty scrap of cheap paper, written painfully by an unpractised hand, were these words, "Notre Dame, please pray for our sick infant," and next to it, on the back of an envelope, "I ask the Sacre Coeur de Jesu, through Notre Dame des Victoires, for a little financial aid." And printed in purple ink, "With gratitude for sparing Edmund's life, a candle every day and I promise one day every week of prayer." I looked at the flickering flames of the ruby-cased candles before the altar and wondered which of all those little lights was Edmund's, and hoped that the flame just flickering out was not the light of "our sick infant".

So into the sunlit square again, the children still climbing about the becurled Louis; still the men putting in a tall warehouse window argue at the foot of the ladder, and I wonder if they have yet elected one of their number to climb up it; and still the urchin at the corner where the Ursuline Sisters had their first home, shouts in raucous inexactitude, "Buy my paper. Extra! Extra! Hitler she's dead," and here, marching upon the cobblestones of the past, is the strident twentieth century.

## FUSTIAN—THE SOUTH SHORE

CROSSING to Levis on the flat, tea-tray ferry one blue morning, we met a man whose uncle had a friend whose daughter-in-law's niece's boy friend had a cousin whose mother-in-law's aunt — anyway, the man knew of someone who had been dug out from under the landslide when a mass of Dufferin Terrace fell, burying the houses below and causing over fifty deaths. The troops were called out from the Citadel, the fire brigade worked all night, both at rescuing the injured and at keeping the fire that had broken out under control. The whole incident was a nightmare, and one would imagine that Quebecers would never forget the tragedy of that September night in 1889. But as we looked back from the River we could see the thickly clustered houses, their thin backs pressed hard against the sheer cliff, built up again on the very spot where that landslide covered, and the cliffs seem to rise sheer from the chimneys of Champlain Street, with the wall of Dufferin Terrace look-





ing top heavy far up above the huddled houses.

Behind the terrace wall towers the impressive Chateau Frontenac, one of the Great Transportation Period Chateaus that anchor Canada to the best traditions of travelling comfort. Complete with Norman turrets, Elizabethan tapestries, Edwardian furnishings and neo-Georgian plumbing, it soars into the surprised French *habitant* air of Old Quebec, its weathered copper roofs catching the morning sun in a jade green snare. A quaint idea came to me of the Chateau landsliding wholesale down the cliff, totally unaffected by the descent, continuing to serve *table d'hôte* to the public with the utmost *savoir faire*! Number 1102 complains that his bathroom has somehow got left on Dufferin Terrace. So sorry, Sir, it will be remedied at once. Or Madame's hairdresser was caught in a bush on the way down. Another will be supplied immediately. I felt sure that nothing so mere as a landslide would disorganize the Chateau Frontenac. I told Robin of my fancy and he very kindly laughed, and after a fitting time remarked:

"Of course, the really interesting part of the Chateau are the vaults and that ancient keystone over the door."

"Yes. It's a pity the vaults aren't open any more. Said to be unsafe nowadays. I like vaults, they have more personality than many other places, don't you think?"

"Particularly Boswell's Brewery vaults," said Robin reminiscently. "But the old keystone is very interesting," he added hurriedly. "I wonder why it never got lost?"

"Odd, when you think that almost all the stones of

Chateau Bigot have vanished. But this single stone survives the burning of the old Chateau St. Louis and is left about the place for years, and then someone finds it and puts it up again on the new Frontenac building. Rather a romantic idea, to make it into the keystone of the arch, as they have done "

"Romance in unexpected places," remarked Robin. "The C.P.R. is hardly of the pre-Raphaelite-Romantic School."

"No. More High Pressure Realism, I'd say."

"True, but it all goes to show"—his attention was diverted by a huge sign on the wharf, now very near, saying "*Charbons et Bois*" for all the fuel-consuming world to read—"It all goes to show," he repeated; continuing absently—

"I think that I shall never see  
A billboard fairer than a tree  
Perhaps, unless the billboards fall  
I'll never see a tree at all."

"Ogden Nash. End quote," and we drove thoughtfully up the ramp into the Township of Levis

Stopping at a gas station, we asked the boy where was the Viennettes Mill. He said he didn't know, but we bore him no ill will, as we were immersed in the Quotation Game. Robin was not so utterly lost to mundane things, however, as he pointed out with very worldly calm the lack of fifteen cents in the change.

The Quotation Game, once begun, is a menace; like "Consequences", there is no knowing where one may end.

"Half a league, half a league, half a league onward," offered the driver, bumping cheerfully along the highway towards the mill side road.

"Give the face of earth around  
And the road before me . . ."

There was a crash as we banged into a large, unseen pothole.

"Don't want it," said Robin, getting out to inspect the connecting rod. "Rejoice, rejoice, all Christian men rejoice," carolled a voice through the floor boards; so evidently nothing was damaged.

At that moment, five nuns appeared, the black and white of their habits sombre against the bright skyline. They approached softly, the slight rustle of voluminous skirts and a tinkle of rosaries hardly audible. Each Sister carried a tin lard pail, proclaiming a berry-picking expedition from the Convent over the hill. There was an echoing thump, as Robin's head met something harder, and an oil-streaked apparition, uttering profanities, emerged practically into the midst of the unsuspecting nuns. The right quotation came to me suddenly.

"Shall I call thee Bird  
Or but a wandering Voice?"



I asked. There was no answer.

“Thy two-fold shout I hear.”

“I should hope so,” said Robin. “So would you ‘two-fold shout’ if you banged your head on the differential.”

I grinned.

“All right,” said he, “but in spite of wounds galore ‘My head is bloody but unbowed!’ Let’s go,” and we drove on.

“I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally,  
And sparkle out among the fern  
To [turn left here] bicker down the valley”

we chanted in unison, and we were at the Viennettes mill.

The old mill on the St. Claud Brook was building at the same time as the Church, and every stonemason in the neighbourhood must have had his dinner pail full in those days, the Church and the mill giving spiritual and bodily food for all, but the latter is just what the Viennettes mill did not supply. For the evil eye fell upon the miller of Viennettes in the person of Bigot, the Bad Genius of New France. The miller, one Roy, had two sons, henchmen of Bigot in many of his unprincipled peculations. Below the mill of Viennettes at the mouth of the St. Claud Brook, were built great warehouses, and there, beside the St. Lawrence, enormous quantities of stolen goods, filched alike from King and people, sold, resold, stolen again, stored, sold at an even higher price, a colossal corner in everything, from nails to the essential food stuffs for a starving populace, passed into and through those graft-riddled,

vice-infested storehouses below the mill at Viennettes.

Possibly out of this store came the rich brocades worn by Angélique de Meloises, the Intendant's intriguing mistress? Did Bigot take trinkets from the stolen valuables at Viennettes to cheer the captive Algonquin Maid of Beaumanoir, if she really ever existed? Nebulous but fascinating as all legendary ghosts, she flits across the Bigot background, a romantic waif among the all too horribly true ghost personnel of the retinue of the last Intendant.

Even the beautifully restored mill, with its interesting historical collection, the work of the present owner, cannot quite obscure the sinister stones, few, but speaking, that remain like plague spots on the nefarious shore below Viennettes.

Sucking noisily and with a feeling of complete inappropriateness, we drank Coca-Cola out of bottles, walking along the shore, scrabbling over uneven river mud, and ruminated upon the historic picture at the time of Bigot and the British conquest.

"It seems to me rather a fluke England ever got Canada."

"In a way, yes," said Robin. "If Montcalm had had his way, Wolfe would never have won the Battle of the Plains. But this swine, Bigot, was against Montcalm, a soldier and a gentleman if ever there was one, while Bigot was just a dirty—" He gurgled furiously on the last drop of Coca-Cola.

"Yes," said I. "I'm glad he was imprisoned when he got back to France. They made him pay back most of the

seventy-five million francs he'd stolen from the King and put him in prison as well. Did you know that Angélique de Meloises was supposed to have lent him enough to pay his debts and get out of prison?"

"Well," said Robin, lending a hand up the bank, "some women will do anything."

"But even so, that seems rather far-fetched, when he ran away and just left Angélique in a besieged town to fend for herself."

"Undoubtedly she was more than capable."

"Perhaps, but I'm darned sure I wouldn't give my money to help any man out of prison if he'd left me cold in a besieged city—or even if he'd just left me cold—or even if I had any money, would you?"

"Exactly," said Robin.



\* \* \*

There is a wayside Chapel dedicated to Ste. Anne farther along the road, with a little tree beside it, and if one overlooks the telephone posts as being offensively modern, the old "*Chapelle*" is a quaint and simple picture.

So we came to the Church Square of Beaumont village. The local legend tells how, upon a day in 1759, the Blessed Virgin Herself came to the defence of the parish church, came three times, in fact, and on each occasion

the fire that was to destroy the building was miraculously extinguished. General Wolfe's army was approaching Quebec, and all through the summer the troops had been marching up the South Shore of the St. Lawrence and making a thoroughly nasty job of it—more than a little pillage and the destruction of crops, which was an absolutely genuine necessity of war, as it meant that the food

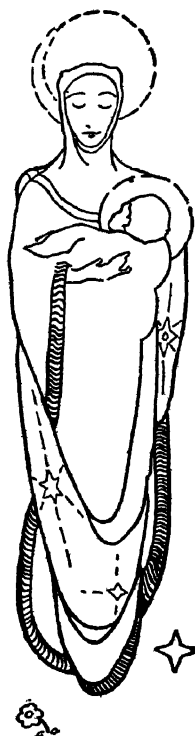
supply of the besieged City of Quebec was thus cut off at its source. A terrible burning illumined the countryside and followed the armies up the South Shore. Many an old French farm-house and most of the parish churches were razed, and on a day in the late summer of 1759 the faggots were piled about the little Church of Beaumont.

The first Chapel on this spot was built in 1694, and after forty years of service to the growing community, the wooden Church was replaced by a fine stone building, not very large, but well proportioned and seemly. By the time the British armies came marching into Beaumont the Church was finished to the last lovely carving, its grey stone exterior beginning to take on the weather marks of



almost thirty hard winters. The villagers of Beaumont, in a misdirected but brave attempt to flout the enemy, put up such a fight that the invading regiments were forced to take reprisals, and this was done, not on the person but on the property of the villagers, and that included the Church, from which safe barricade the stoutest resistance had come. So the faggots were laid and lighted, and the Red Coats marched on towards Levis.

When the frightened inhabitants returned in the evening, rushing to their beloved little Church to mourn its undoubted loss, they found the building unharmed, and half the village already on its knees in thanksgiving before the charred door. The good Father said the Blessed Virgin Herself had caused the fires of the invader to shrivel and die, so that the Church might be saved to the good people of Beaumont. Strangely enough, the same thing happened three times, and, due to a very localized Providence, or as the result of wet wood, the charmingly simple little building is to-day exactly as it was built over two hundred years ago. Later, during the British conquest, Beaumont Church again attracted attention, this time as the place where Moncton posted General Wolfe's first proclamation to the Ca-





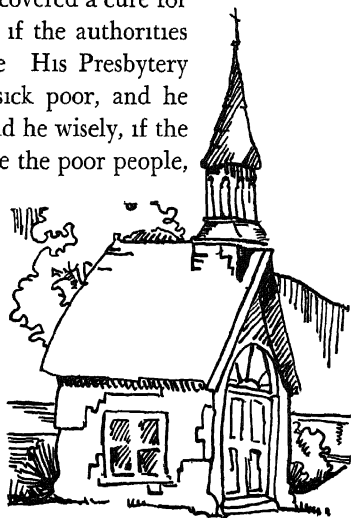
nadians. From it they read the following historic words:

"The formidable sea and land armament that the people of Canada now behold" began the writ and it continued to point out that the capture of Canada was the intended function of the martial array; but continues Wolfe: "The King wages no war with the industrious peasant, the sacred orders of religion, or the defenceless women and children; to these in their distressful circumstances, his royal clemency offers protection. The people may remain unmolested in their lands, inhabit their houses, and enjoy their religion in security. For these inestimable blessings, I expect the Canadians will take no part in the great contest between the two crowns. But if, by a vain obstinancy and misguided valour, they presume to appear in arms, they must expect the worst fatal consequences."

There is no equivocation in that! Wolfe followed up with reference to "The unparalleled barbarities exerted by the French against our settlements in America" which he says, "might justify the bitterest revenge in the army under my command," but that nevertheless, no outright revenge will be taken unless the inhabitants fight the British. But the proclamation had no effect, there was much fighting and many churches and villages were destroyed in consequence.

In the crypt lie buried at least two outstanding priests of the parish, for, strangely enough, the priests of Beaumont have produced from their ranks not a few remarkable men: the young heroic padre who gave his life caring

for the plague-stricken victims and died of the dread disease, the one who walked away from the village and joined up with the Americans who were trying to conquer Quebec. He never came back, but lived over the border for the rest of his life. Yet another shepherd of the Beaumont souls turned from the faith and, to the appalled horror of his congregation, became an Anglican clergyman. Finally, there was Père Campan, who was a doctor before he decided to enter the priesthood. Apparently he was a married man, with a family, an Army Surgeon, and hardly the person for a sudden religious vocation. However, there he was, the incumbent of Beaumont in 1788. What happened to the wife and family I do not know. It must be a little unsettling to find that one is married to a priest instead of to the Army Surgeon as one had always thought! But early training in the art of healing stayed with Père Campan, and his experiments with herbs finally led him to announce that he had discovered a cure for cancer. He offered to tell the doctors if the authorities would promise him a pension for life. His Presbytery was crowded with sufferers and the sick poor, and he wished to be able to help them, for, said he wisely, if the doctors know my secret they will charge the poor people, but if I have a pension I will cure them for nothing. Père Campan must have had his great moment in life, for he genuinely believed he had the cure of the world's most dread physical ailment, but he



passed from the quiet village scene into the deeper quiet of the Beaumont crypt over a hundred years ago, and still the secret of cancer eludes the inquiring mind of Science.

And since those times the Church has stood, sturdily serene, beside the old Presbytery, between the new highway and the age-old River, gathering the simple history of the countryside about its walls like the patina on old silver, its little votive flames flickering in the draught of the quietly passing centuries.

\* \* \*

I am afraid the five nuns must have got wet picking



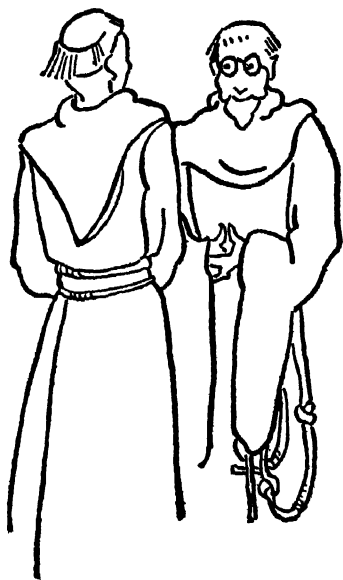
the blueberries, or blackberries, or whatever coloured berries they were going to collect in the tin lard pails, because a massive rain cloud pursued us down the River and eventually caught us in a wriggly snare of lightning in

the village of L'Ilet. Another corkscrew of electricity fizzled down onto the radiator, and I took cover in a little shop labelled "Sandwiches, Meals All Time." It turned out to have a spotless parlour, with two large pictures of the Royal Family, the incredibly pink Princesses looking out of an embossed cardboard frame sprinkled with glit-

tering iridescent powder, while the King and Queen looked almost bewildered at the regality of their gilt fret-work surroundings, embellished with dollops of ruby and emerald glass cut with the magnificence of the Crown jewels. Above a door hung a knob of dried palm—for in French Canada lightning does not strike a house that has Palm Sunday palms above its door. I got right underneath, so there would be no mistake! A bustling young woman came in and laid down two spotless place mats on a painted table.

“But yes, sandwiches and coffee? *Certainment.*”

She whisked off. Meantime the *bébé*, a staggering, bandy-legged morsel in blue “can’t bust’em” overalls, pushed through between Papa’s booted legs and approached our table. It sat down, very suddenly, and a bellow burst out of that small child that rattled the roof. Out whisked Mamma with a bit of ham in one hand, round popped Papa from the counter, in toddled Grandpa, his patriarchal beard agitated; two female heads crowded a window. The bell tinkled from the front door as a huge farmer entered, accompanied by the brownish-greyish





snappy dog peculiar to the country, and everyone talked loudly at once, the *bébé's* bellows rising above the general pandemonium. Outside the thunder rolled, and lightning twinkled on two Royal pictures. Mamma now had *bébé* clasped to her ample gingham

bosom. The bellows ceased; the noise settled into the ordinary full-chested conversational tone of French Canada, and Mamma looked everywhere for the slice of ham.

"But where is she?" said Mamma, searching between two tubs of fertilizer. "The good ham, alas, where is she?"

Robin joined in the hunt, looking curiously into a pile of potato sacks, and then—rather unnecessarily, I thought—under the counter. Everyone looked except me.

"Why don't you look?" asked Robin, grinning.

"Why are you looking?"

"Don't want them to find it," hissed Robin through his teeth—"Don't want it off the floor."

"Don't worry," says I. "The dog ate it some time ago."

So all was well, and presently we had new ham sandwiches and excellent coffee, and talked about the tragic epidemic and Grosse Isle, which we could see out the window.

Typhus!—that is what came out to Canada in the Irish immigrant ships in the first half of the eighteen-hundreds. The terrible plight of the starving peasants in Ireland and the famine there had caused hundreds of these unfortunate people to migrate. The ships of that day were ill-provided for the comfort of passengers at the best of times, but the wretched immigrant ships were floating hulks of filthy disease. The result of unsanitary, overcrowded living conditions, insufficient food and long sea time was typhus. When ships arrived in Quebec, it was not at all unusual for half the passengers to have died on the voyage; others, sick and dying, lying on the decks, the unaffected ones rushing ashore away from infection. It was a serious and deadly state of affairs.



This terrifying item appeared in the *Quebec Gazette* of June 12th, 1832: "Since the appearance of typhus was declared on Friday last the town has continued under great excitement;" and on that day the first twenty-six people died of the plague. Later, another item appeared in the *Gazette* saying that over "5,000 Quebecers were struck down by the scourge, brought to this country by crowded sailing ships." As the total population was only 37,000 at that time, the percentage was appallingly high. The victims were carted in masses to huge burial pits, much as in the time of the great plague of London, and buried wholesale.

To prevent the recurrence of such a frightful epi-

demic, the Legislature voted \$50,000 to be devoted to quarantine services. The Military were to run the whole thing, and Grosse Isle, thirty-five miles down the River from Quebec itself, was selected as the quarantine station.

From our window, Grosse Isle looked green and peaceful in a rain-washed freshness after the passing thunder shower. But what of the thousands of humble bleached bones just beneath the green turf? And what of the heroic doctors, nursing Sisters and faithful priests whose bones also lie beneath that grassy pall?

\* \* \*

Whereas the Côte de Beaupré might be called The Carpet Country, and the Kingdom of Saguenay The Barbeau Country, this part of the south shore is certainly The Bateau Country. Ships everywhere, on stands, over doors, inside cases, on work benches, on the River, and in bottles; all sorts, sizes and descriptions, from the whisky blanc bottle model to Uncle Louis Joseph's fishing smack on the beach. By great luck, we saw a master craftsman carving out a largish model boat, there on his front gallery. Apparently the whole family, girls and all, help in the making of these model boats. For generations the family have been wood-workers, mainly carving boats, and the making of these really beautiful models is the main industry of the house. Mother, not to be outdone in any way, knocks off hooked mats upon which full rigged ships of uncertain ballast tear through incredibly stormy seas, or should one want something less exciting for Junior's bedroom, she





can do you a couple of red-sailed schooners sailing in opposite directions, both, by some miracle of the craft, drawing full sail on the same wind, but nevertheless making a very decorative rug. And finally, Baby Brother will sell you, for a consideration, his newest work of art, a small ship, a bit lopsided, and with its mast somehow gone right through the flat bottom of the vessel, making it, as he honestly pointed out "*par bon*" for sailing, but, hopefully, very beautiful as an ornament.

"Why is it that ships in bottles always remind one of Napoleonic prisoners of war?"

"I don't know, except that the French prisoners made them fashionable in England. No one ever had the time before, I don't suppose, and the English hadn't the patience. The French prisoners made them to sell, just like Baby Brother back there." We grinned. "And so they got money for extra food and comforts, poor devils."

"But the French must have been making these little model ships for centuries. This family have been here for generations, certainly long before the Napoleonic Wars, and look how they shove things into bottles at the least provocation "

"Oh, I expect they hand it from father to son. The French have always been the fine craftsmen. Look at the cut velvet of the Middle Ages, and metalwork too, and it was the Huguenots who brought the lace-making and silk-dyeing into England during the religious persecutions in France in the fifteen-somethings."

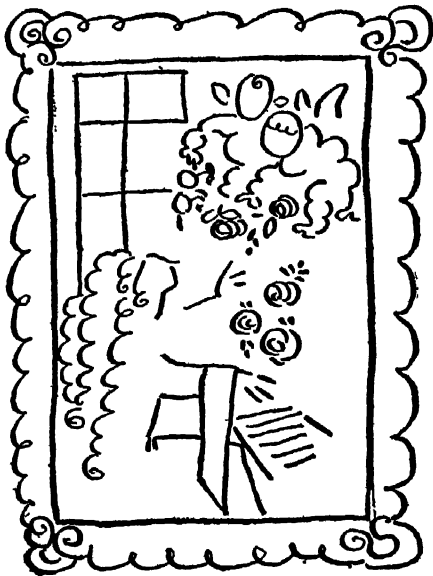
We pondered.

"These French-Canadian *habitants* are worthy successors to those craftsmen. Look at the church carvings in the province; and the weaving, the lovely colours that they always use, and the adaption of traditional design. Wonderful craftsmen!"

"And yet they cannot tell a villainously bad picture when they see it," said I.

"Are you referring to the St. Cecilia in the ship carver's house?"

"I am. That makes the fourth. They are all the same, and all very bad lithographs, and yet a million copies are spread like green mould all over *habitant* Quebec. How do you account for it?"

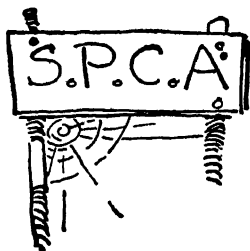


"My solution would be some Jew dealer in old furniture, touting about the country picking up antiques for a song, and giving the unsuspecting farmers these appalling greenish lithographs as a bonus on their priceless maple *amoire*, or great grandmamma's old bed."

Later, we heard that Robin's surmise was the only-too-true solution. Some few years previously, a green blight of St. Cecílias appeared, and at the same time a great many

heirloom treasures disappeared from the attics and cellars of *habitant* Quebec. Well, I would willingly paint a triptych of almost any Saint in the calendar for that *amoire* in the Charlesborg house. Not that I think the family would like my effort, for they already have a green St. Cecilia. I shudder to think what treasure of the past went out of the low, old door before St. Cecilia came in.

Nearing Rivière du Loup we came upon a cow. It appeared to be in the last stages of strangulation, its head almost doubled under its chest, the whole anatomical puzzle wound round with miles of rope entangled in a wooden neck yoke. We got out at the roadside farm-house, rushed up the front porch steps and banged on the double door. A girl popped around from the back of the house; apparently the front door was only for funerals.



"Your cow," we cried, "she is—" "What's strangling in French?" We didn't know. Two other women had arrived, looking interested but vague.

"Your cow," I began again, and Robin gave a very realistic imitation of a cow strangling. The three women shrieked with laughter.

"Your cow is—your cow she—eh—dies," we said.

They glanced over the pasture towards the distant animal contorted into knots—and shook their heads.

"No, Monsieur is mistaken. She is alive."

"But—" Robin gave his cow scene again.

They yelled with completely uncontrollable mirth, tears running down their cheeks.

"*Si drolle*," gasped one. "Call Grand-père."

Robin mopped his brow as Grand-père hobbled up. He eyed us suspiciously and we gave a masterly joint performance of the "Strangling Cow". He gasped once.

"The mad sickness," he said, and herding the women rapidly into the house, banged the door.

"That ends the tale of the Contorted Cow," said Robin. "Evidently my tragic impersonation was not enough."

"I thought it most heartrending," I comforted, "particularly when you panted for air. The hanging tongue, the goggling eye, the cow-like moo-map—"

"That," said Robin severely, eyeing my grinning face, "is Art."

We drove on into Rivière du Loup.



## PILOT CLOTH—HARBOUR HISTORY

WE ATTENDED the launching of His Majesty's Canadian ship *Gaspé*, one of the minesweepers built for Canada in a Canadian shipyard, down by the St. Charles flats. Not far away, some four hundred years previously, Jacques Cartier had launched his first all-Canadian built ship, and found her good—good enough to take the round trip up the River to Hochelaga, and so inaugurate the first River service into the Port of Montreal.

Nowadays the captain of the first ship to make Montreal each spring, after the River is free of ice, is presented with a suitably embellished walking-stick in honour of the event. This tradition had not come into effect at the time of Cartier's arrival, but apparently a reception committee in feathers and canoes came out to greet the white man, and to give him the freedom of the wilderness that was to become, in time, the Port of Montreal. From that first little wooden boat, through the centuries of sail, into the age of steam, and up to the present days of steel fighting ships, the shipyards of Quebec have turned out proud vessels for the unseen seaways. Here in the yards of a brackish riverside have been launched ocean-going ships, built very often by men who had never seen the salt water, or sailed further than Ile d'Orleans, and yet the Quebec ships were famous for centuries. Boom times and destitute times have left their marks upon the trade, and at the moment

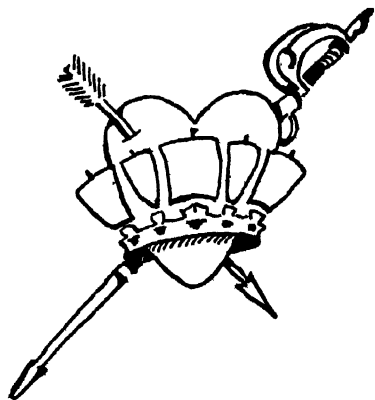
of the *Gaspé's* completion a launching was somewhat of an event in Quebec.

In the roaring seventeen-hundreds, however, things were different, and at the end of the century the Napoleonic wars brought the trade to a peak of business. In 1797 four ships and two brigs were built in Quebec; in 1798 a rival crowd launched three ships and four brigs; 1799 saw another firm on the list with seven ships and three brigs, varying in tonnage from 104 tons to 363 tons. Bigger and better shipbuilding!

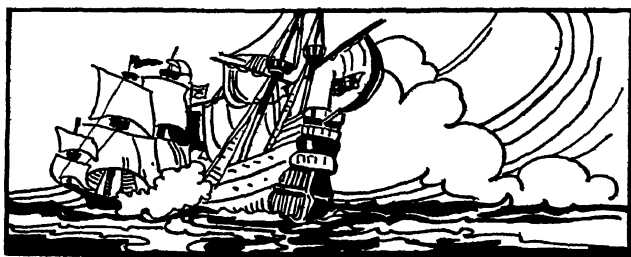
The Napoleonic wars also affected the British shipyards, and the increase in building caused a shortage of trees to build "the wooden walls of England", so the Admiralty sent to Canada for more. The tall, straight Canadian trees made perfect masts for the ships of the line, and

it is quite possible that Nelson's famous signal at Trafalgar broke out in a flutter of coloured flags from a mast of Quebec pine. As a young man, Horatio Nelson himself sailed up the River and visited Quebec—not only visited it, but found romance within its grey

old walls. Here he met the beautiful Miss Mary Simpson, his "Dulcenia", for whom the young captain of His Maj-



esty's ship *Albermarle* "Conceived a romantic passion," as the biographer so neatly observes. Miss Simpson was the daughter of one of the Scottish officers who came out to Quebec with the Highland regiments under General Wolfe, and in the year 1782 was a belle of local society. The very correct old chronicle states that "the studious, but impressionable youth" was so overcome by the charms of his "Dulcenia" that at the last he was "removed by force." Whether this was physical, or of duty, seems undecided, but evidently the impressionably youthful Nelson was very loathe to leave Quebec. However, he did so, sailing between the flame-clad shores of the September St. Lawrence, down to the seaways to become the great hero and permanent inspiration for generations of "studious but impressionable" young naval officers who have followed in his wake.



Before Nelson, and about the time his "Dulcenia's" father was preparing to lead his men to the capture of Quebec, another naval officer, apparently extraordinarily studious, and definitely not impressionable, was making navigation history further down the St. Lawrence. La

Traverse (The Ferry Crossing) was a reach of treacherous water, and, said the French, "it is completely impassable." "But how interesting!" said the British. "Quite impossible to get ships up," said the local pilots. "What do you bet?" said the Navy, in effect.

Had the dwellers in the scattered farm-houses on the South Shore been less heavy in their slumbers during certain nights in the summer of 1759 they might have heard the soft splash of secret oars, the swinging swish of a sounding lead cutting through the night air as a clever young navigating officer whispered the important findings into the cauliflower ear of his coxswain. "Slow, way enough. Two and a half fathom. Pull, my hearties, 'nough or we'll be aground. Almost three fathom, Coxswain, on the star-board bow. If the Admiral can't get the whole fleet through these places on my charting, I'll eat my sounding lead! Easy men, and don't wheeze so, Cox'n, you'll have the French onto us! Three and a half fathom." Young Lieutenant Cook, Royal Navy, is charting the impassable Traverse. Soon the British fleet sailed right up to a horrified Quebec, that awoke one morning to find a formidable mass of ships of war laying out their reflections upon silver waters hitherto deemed impregnable. And James Cook had begun his remarkable career. Much later he explored the far western coasts of Canada, adding more laurels to an already heavy crown. The discoverer of the Antipodes, and one of the great navigators of all time, James Cook did not have to eat his sounding lead at Quebec, or at any other time in an illustrious career.



As a running commentary on the times, a background to harbour history, the Press Gangs operated with ferocious clandestine success. All along the waterfront, in the Canoterie, and among the disreputable grog shops of Wolfe's Cove unsuspecting Quebecers disappeared with increasing frequency. A couple of noggins of rum, a knock on the head, and the next thing a man realized was the lift of a ship at sea, and the lonely song of the wind through straining halyards. The Press Gangs took any likely-looking man, no matter what his work or inclinations, and rather naturally the Navy did not feel that men serving against their own free will could be trusted ashore. Many a ship's company never saw dry land for a couple of years at a stretch, and then it was possibly in some foreign port where there was nothing else to do but return to the ship. What use is, say, Port o' Spain to a bootmaker from Mountain Street, Quebec? Or Haiti to young Batiste-dit-de-Sauvage from the old farm at Beaupré? Only in for a day's marketing, was Batiste, and when he had sold the black bull, all he did was step into a tavern down Sault-au-Matelot Street to celebrate the deal with Pierre Renaud. And that was the last they saw of Quebec. What use is the Spanish Main to two farmer lads from Beaupré way?

Those were the days when the Navy tried to bribe men to join the fleet, and the King issued the following proclamation on the subject. Starting in the truly redundant manner of the days of the third George it announces, "Whereas it is Our Royal intention to give all

due encouragement to such Seamen and Landsmen as shall voluntarily offer themselves in Our Service, We have thought fit to publish this Our Proclamation—" In short Our Royal idea was to offer "Our Royal Bounty of three pounds sterling" which, in this day, seems a somewhat flamboyant name for fifteen dollars! Three pounds sterling if you go voluntarily, if not Our Royal Press Gang will catch you!

Some four years after this proclamation was issued, the brother of the King sailed up the River and landed in Quebec, from his ship H.M.S. *Resistance*. His Royal Highness, Edward Augustus, Duke of Kent, was a soldier, and as a soldier he had come with his regiment, direct from Gibraltar, in a troop convoy. It was a record voyage for those days, having taken only seven weeks. The handsome Royal Duke and his fascinating morganatic wife, Madame St. Laurent, took up residence at Kent House, and Quebec gave itself up to a highly social and devilishly elegant period—a time of balls, and routs, and the drinking of China tea from small, handleless cups; a period of brocades and affectations, while the breezes from countless waving fans wafted Quebec into the Dresden Shepherdess era of Georgian England. Admiral Nelson's beautiful "Dulcenia" graced the balls, but not as Miss Simpson, for now, nine years after Nelson's sudden exit, the lovely lady was the wife of Lord Dorchester's military secretary.

If Kent House, standing somewhat back from the bustle of the Chateau Frontenac and St. Louis Street, could show a pageant of the honoured ghosts of Quebec, how

many would be sailor men! Swinging their way across the centuries go the salty, singing seamen who brought the old world to the new, and undreamed of potentialities to the future. Abraham Martin, "The Scot", he was called, was the very first St. Lawrence pilot, who in the first half of the sixteen-hundreds married the daughter of Louis Hébert, the first farmer of Canada, whose infant granddaughter was the first white child baptized in the new world. Later Abraham Martin took up land also and his name lives for ever in that famous tract of land atop the cliffs where, at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, the British took Canada from the French, that September morning in 1759.

Jacques Cartier would be among the ghosts, in plum-coloured velvet, salt-stained and somewhat frayed, his map of the Kingdom of Saguenay unfolded before him as he studies the dragons depicted as being indigenous to the Lac St. Jean district. Turning suddenly to a neighbouring ghost in the pageant Cartier might remark: "Pray good Sire, think you for certain that the world is round? For, of a surety, do I, most verily."

"Of course the world is round, Sirrah! What ignoramus speaks to David Kirk?"

"My name is Cartier, out of St. Malo. My theory is of a round globe, or how else do we not fall off?"

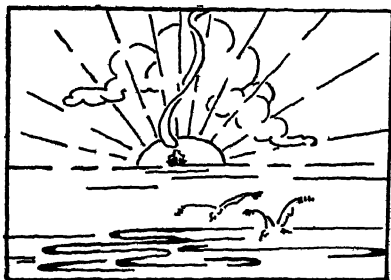
"Cartier! I salute you, Sir, for a great sailor," says David Kirk, sweeping off his feathered hat. "And you are right, the earth is round. My brother there has much learning on the matter, for he navigated our ships, and

brought us safely to the capture of Quebec." But the Kirks had to give up the town after the signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Leaving behind as a gift to Madame Hébert, a little negro boy, they sailed regretfully away down the River, back to an unsettled England, and Quebec was freed from the first of her many sieges.

The figure of Admiral Phipps stands somewhat uncertainly in the background as becomes a sailor whose only connection with Quebec Harbour was his intense, but futile, desire to get there. This is the Commander of the ill-fated English fleet that was wrecked in the mouth of the St. Lawrence on its way to capture Quebec. The fleet was removed by a miracle, so 'twas said, and the miracle was commemorated in the name of the little Nôtre Dame de la Victoire Church.

Two gentlemanly ghosts in naval uniform bow stiffly, but with studied courtliness, to each other—Admiral Vauquelin of France, and Admiral Saunders of England, the rival Admirals at the taking of Quebec, thirty odd years before the Duke of Kent arrived in the old town. And among the ghostly company strolls General Murray, in scarlet uniform, the first British commandant, talking stiffly to Monseigneur Laval, the first French bishop, and the great Samuel de Champlain, astrolabe in hand speaks earnestly to Lavendrye, and Hennepen, the priest who discovered the Mississippi, as the large shade of Talon, the domestically-minded Intendant, beams upon the massed homespun ghosts crowding the outer courtyard, "That," he tells Charles Dickens' Victorian shade, "is the

result of my scheme for bringing out the Bride ships, hundreds of marriages and thousands of children." Dickens seems vaguely shocked, and turning to the guest on his left finds Donnacona, the Indian Chief, and friend of the early white man, an impassive and very sad shade who died an exile at the court of France. And all among the crowding ghosts in brocades, and gorgeous uniforms go the *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois*, the River boatmen, and the St. Lawrence pilots, and the humble ferrymen of the Ile d'Orleans, the men from the Canoterie, the Foulon, the Côte de Beaupré, the sailors out of Brittany, and the British Tars; for in the pageant of Quebec the sailor men have been intrinsically part of the parade. The salt sea may be hundreds of river miles away but the tang of salt is in the very air of Quebec, brackish, pungent, keeping alive the traditions of past. The history of the Old Town is wound about with spun-yarn and sealed with Stockholm tar; for without the sailors down the centuries Quebec would have no history, and the great River would still be flowing from here to there, all undisturbed by European intruders from across the seas.



## WHITE LAWN—TERCENTENARY

ALL Quebec was *en fête* that day of shimmering August sunshine, the first for a week, and a small girl standing on the railing of the Ursuline Convent told me, solemnly, that the "Good Saints have made the weather especially in answer to the prayers of the Sisters. Because, look you," she said, "the so-beautiful decorations would be spoiled in the rain and the Mother General she would be of a wetness."

"The Mother General, is she here?"

The child looked at me in disgust—such ignorance! But as there was nothing else to do at the moment, she deigned to explain.

"*Mais oui*. From France, mark you, she has come by the grand steamship and she visits now with the Mother Superior here in the *Monastère*."\* She waved a comprehensive hand towards the grey building, and almost fell off the railings.

"Steady," said I, pushing heavily on that portion of her anatomy covered by the bow of a large blue sash. "Will the Mother General come out when all the other Sisters come?"

"*Certainment*. Ooh, look, Madamel!"

It was worth looking. From our precarious perch on

\* A "*Monastère*" can be either a Monastery or a Convent in French Canada. There is no distinction in the word

the railings we could see over the heads of the crowd that jammed Parlour Street. Around the curve at the bottom came marching soldiers left over from French-Canadian



history. In grey uniforms, the trimmings bright red, broad cummerbands around high waist lines, white spatted and begunned, they came, the Pontifical Zouaves, their chic bolero jackets swinging, baggy Turkish trousers flapping over the buttoned gaiters, their Foreign Legion caps bobbing through the crowds until

the Captain shouted an order, and the incongruous company came to a halt. The girl-child beside me was entranced; so was I. Nothing astonished me very much in Quebec, but this arrival of young men in fancy dress at a religious ceremony made me wonder what it was all about.

The story of the Pontifical Zouaves is a colourful and gallant one. At the time of Garibaldi and the rise of modern Italy, there were many disagreements between the Pope and the Italian Government. As a loyal religious gesture, Quebec recruited and sent over a regiment of Guards, called Pontifical Zouaves, to protect the person and property of His Holiness the Pope. When the trou-

bles settled down into comparative political quiet, and the isolationist policy of the Popes, which has lasted until very recent times, began, the Canadian Zouaves returned home famous, and as a reward, the Pope gave to each man a dispensation from fasting for the rest of his life. The present-day religious Guards, wearing the picturesque costume of their gallant predecessors, attend all religious processions and festivals, enacting their traditional part as protectors of the persons of the Religious, whether Pope, priest or nun. The Zouaves of to-day stood at ease, chatting to their friends, their long guns butt down on



the road. By now the excitement, though subdued, was very apparent, and the crowd shifted continuously from one foot to another. The child and I found less need to hang on as we were flattened onto the railings by the press of people behind us. Glancing up suddenly, I looked straight into the eyes of beauty. Standing at a dormer window, high in the

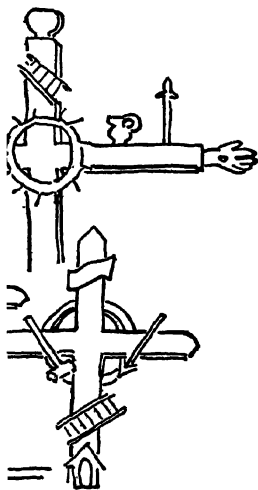
old roof, framed by the thrown back green slat shutters,



the sun gleaming on stiff white coif, stood the most lovely Ursuline nun. Young, her large eyes sparkling with unwonted excitement, a flashing smile showing perfect teeth, and the faultless, creamy skin faintly pink under the severe white edging of her headdress, she talked animatedly to some unseen Sister in the room behind, describing the crowds, smiling, excited and happy as a child at its first party. Evidently this Sister was not to leave the cloister with the nuns who were to visit at the Hotel Dieu. But even so, this was a memorable day, and the beautiful nun was living it to the full from the top dormer window.

The "*Monastère*" door opened, the crowd of alumni and present pupils lining the path inside the garden railings drew together in anticipatory silence, and I deserted the now very excited little girl. (I am sure she must have had the pattern of those wrought iron curlycues imprint-

ed upon her tummy, so hard was she pressed against the railings!) Pushing my way backwards through the crowd, I eventually arrived at the spot immediately opposite the "*Monastère*" entrance. From where I stood, I could see straight through the tall wrought iron gate, up the flagged path to the main door, into the audience hall, gloomy beyond the sunny yard, and beyond, again through an open cloister door, into the illuminated past.



The Sisters came slowly forward, into the world of to-day, their coifed heads silhouetted against the lighted picture above a small altar-table. The picture, very bright in the inner gloom of the second room, showed a galleon, full-rigged and white sailed against massed clouds, the blue seas foaming at the speeding bows of the ship that brought the first nuns out to the New World, three hundred years ago this day.

August 1st, 1639, August 1st, 1939, three hundred years between that sail-heavy ship and the automobiles waiting in Parlour Street. The nuns, in black and white medieval habits, are coming out from the inviolable cloister approaching the world of 1939 against a never-forgotten background of 1639.

Spontaneous applause broke out as the nuns came under the decorated doorway, and redoubled now and again as some Sister, evidently beloved by her pupils and ex-pupils in the crowd, moved, smilingly, down to the waiting motors. One nun stopped, faltering a little, her hand outstretched against the gatepost of the world, her under lip caught in, her fine, drawn features dead white. A man, obviously her brother by the family resemblance, stepped quickly forward and escorted her through the lane in the crowd to a waiting car. Later I saw her again, smiling happily, watching the crowds that pressed about the procession. But one little elderly Sister, like a small, grey mouse, huddled in the corner of a closed car, looked straight out in front, plump little hands fidgiting incessantly with the stiff edges of her starched white collar.

It is quite possible that the Small Mouse Sister had never been in, perhaps never even seen, an automobile before, and she was frightened.

Among the sixty Sisters, Ursulines and visiting Augustines, who came out into the crowded world of Quebec that day, were some of the most lovely faces I have ever seen. Such calm is not in our world of to-day; nor are the lovely skin tones. The Sisters, in their severe white head-dresses, gave the most complete lie to all the cosmetic advertisements in the world! The flush of excitement on the cheeks of some, the sparkling, clear eyes, the white teeth, were object lessons to modern beauty culturists. The clever, clear-cut face of a tall nun was like an alabaster cameo. Another Sister held out her hand to an elderly woman in the crowd who grasped two small children to her; a relation, perhaps, or even an old servant with her grandchildren.

Then came the Mother General of the Ursuline Order, strong, serene and clever, observant of the animated crowd, relieving somewhat her habitual austerity as she inclined her head to right and left, acknowledging the applause. With her walks the Mother Superior of Quebec Ursulines, the sunlight enhancing her fine features. The excitement, the religious respect, and the feeling of something momentous, took hold of the gaily dressed crowd, and no one was exempt from the "once in a lifetime" atmosphere. It was all incredibly thrilling. At one time I was standing next to a tall Anglican Clergyman, bare-

headed, as were most of the men, and all unknowing, he spoke aloud:

"What beautiful, quiet faces. What peace!" he said, and sighed.

\* \* \*

Later, at the Hotel Dieu Monastère, where more crowds had gathered to see the Ursulines arrive, when the Sisters disembarked from their cars, the same hush, and then applause greeted their coming. I arrived down there too late to see if the Small Grey Mouse had enjoyed her drive, but I am sure, myself, that she entered the hospitable Hotel Dieu Cloister with a prayer of thankfulness for s a n c t u a r y again from this most unpeaceful world. Many Ursulines before her have done the same thing, through the three hundred years of fire, battle, siege and pestilence that have been the portion of Quebec. When shells fell in the Ursuline Convent during the weeks before Wolfe took Quebec, the Hotel Dieu and the General Hospital nuns both took in refugee Ursulines. The General Hospital nuns went to their Cloister after the other two Orders, but the old Hospital has given shelter to nuns of both the other Orders throughout its two hundred and more years.

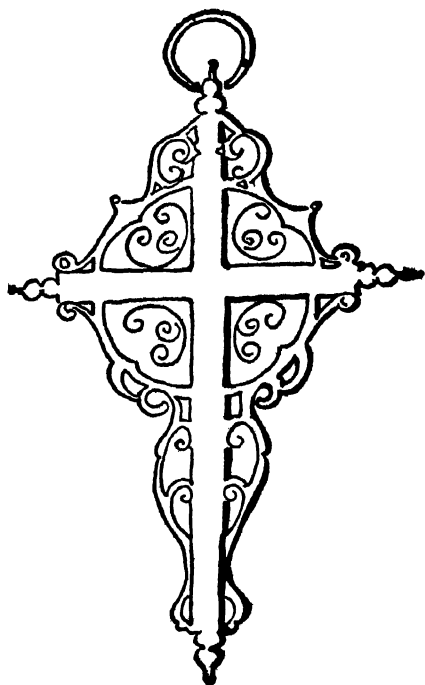


The handsome, black-robed priest had been giving the newspaper people some facts, and I was making snapshot sketches on the fringe of the Press. When he left them, he stopped.

"What paper do you represent?" he asked.

"No paper, Father, but a book on Quebec."

"Indeed? And can I give you any help?"



"Thank you, yes. Have the nuns been out of their Cloister before to-day?"

"In 1908, they had a special dispensation for the tercentenary of Quebec City. Otherwise, never."

"Thank you, Father." I scribbled in my notes.

He watched intently. "And what is your name?"

I told him, and asked if I could manage to get into the Chapel, which seemed to be open now. He

took me to the door, bid me a courteous adieu, and went off through a small postern at the left of the chancel rails

The beautiful Hotel Dieu Chapel was lighted and decorated for a service, as I now realized. A crowd of people surged into every available seat, the side aisles, and stood four deep before the chancel rails. Many candles flickered on the golden altar, and illuminated a fine copy of Ruben's "Descent from the Cross" that forms the reredos of the altar. The elaborated gilding gleamed in the shifting light, and through a ceiling high grille at the side of the chancel floated, in high, undulating periods, the voices of a choir of unseen White Sisters.

Standing as I was on the inside step of the main door, I could see above the heads of the intervening crowds through the open vestry door, to where the priests were robing. Presently, a man in a black cassock and lace-trimmed surplice came out and started pushing the people to right and left of the main door where I stood. I was already flat against a wall. The crowd in front were shepherded into side aisles, leaving only a single row of people standing against the wall of the inner porch. I had no idea what it was all about, but determined to find out.

The unseen choir of nuns sang on, and a blue vapour of incense filled the Church, as the main doors were thrown open, and lights gleamed suddenly on all the gilded cornices around the high altar. A car drew up outside. Some peculiar rustling that I could not place occurred beyond my view in the garden, and a sudden hush fell upon the crowd there. Glancing round, I beheld in the doorway, a figure from the illumined pages of the past; time turned swiftly back, and medieval history in

all its pageantry, its sumptuousness and its vivid glory, came towards me

For I have never seen a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church close to before

The same dry rustling began inside the Chapel, as the crowds swept like a great wave flattening on the shore onto their knees to receive the Blessing. Kneeling too, I saw, within a foot of my face, the scarlet wool of the Cardinal's gown, and raising startled eyes, saw next the large, finely wrought gold cross on the breast, and finally, the clever, keenly alive face of Rodrigue, Cardinal Villeneuve, Archbishop of Quebec. I may say quite clearly that I was thrilled. The scarlet clad figure paused immediately before me, and I realized that I was receiving direct Blessing from the outstretched ringed hand of Canada's only Cardinal.



As the procession passed down the aisle, I glanced about, and noticed among the gay summer dresses and flowery hats, two tonsured, monkish heads, humbly bent above brown Franciscan habits, and beyond a grey-robed nun, kneels beside an old, old woman,

wearing a rusty black cloak, her lined face like carved ivory in the subdued light. Beyond again, down the aisle, a red-robed acolyte, his lace surplice stiffly starched, stands ready to open the chancel gate for His Excellency and the officiating priests, gorgeous in fabulous vestments, standing before the jewelled high altar, all directly from the pictured parchment pages of some medieval manuscript, gold leaf and scarlet, brown Franciscan monks, and the sombre grey Sister of Charity, even the aged, cloaked woman, one so often sees in illuminated *Books of Hours* of the fourteenth century.

All this, and more also, lay before my enthralled eyes in the Chapel of the Hotel Dieu, Quebec, on a brilliant August day, Anno Domini, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine. The unseen singing sisters, the incense, the sonorous Latin words, the vestments and the kneeling crowds, all had a mesmeric effect upon one. Only when the Chapel door was unlocked by a porter with a huge old key, to let out a fainting woman, did I return from historical yesterdays to historic to-day. Soon the Press wanted to get out in time to get the story written in time for the paper going to press, and I left with them, through the again unlocked door. Outside we exchanged cards and they rushed off to their offices.

Passing up a hill I spied a post-card of an old woman baking that I liked. The cards were the best I had yet seen, so in I walked to the store to buy some. My amazement was as nothing to that of two men sitting in the barber chairs within. They gaped through the soap froth,

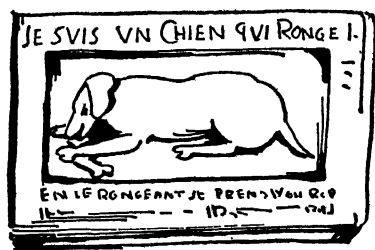


and the two barbers held immobile razors in palsied hands, staring. Stopping in my tracks, fully realizing the enormity of a woman being in such an unthinkable place in Quebec Province, gazing at a card of the Chateau Frontenac under a tropic sky, I waited a full half minute to see if any of those men would move. Then I bolted, but the tableau of outraged manhood was still solidified. That same evening, taking Robin to show him the post cards, which he could buy with the utmost propriety, I was enchanted to observe, through the open door, that a neat barrage had been arranged composed of strings of hanging post cards slung from a string right across the store from side to side, thus curtaining the sacred precincts of the barber shop from the unhallowed eyes of stray female tourists. Another rather medieval thought!

Continuing my homeward way, in passing the Anglican Cathedral I noticed there was a wedding. I stopped beside the inner railing, under a spreading tree. The Anglican Cathedral is so utterly Georgian in feeling and atmosphere, so perfectly retaining the well-bred Episcopalianism of its day, that its classic austerity is soothing after the baroque splendours of the more colourful churches. All was uncontroversially English as Rupert Brook's Grantchester pictures, and I could see the "Curates on clerical, printless toe" hurrying across the close and disappearing into the Georgian house where the vicar lives. Just then, from the severe Georgian portals of the old Cathedral, stepped a lace-clad bride. Two tiny pink bridesmaids skipped down the steps waving colonial bou-

quets, and from the belfry the bell pealed out, echoing, re-echoing from the old stone buildings across the narrow street.

So past the Ursuline Convent, quiet now, with some of the decorations disarranged. The nuns are not back from the Hotel Dieu, and the waiting cloister, behind high walls, is almost empty. At last I am at the house of Bigot's beautiful mistress on Rue St. Louis, stepping, as I open the door, from the spiritual into the definitely secular past of old Quebec.



## PATCH 25

### BATISTE—ILE D'ORLEANS

**D**ECIDING rather suddenly to go to the Isle d'Orleans, we drove along the crowded streets of Lower Town, out past the market and across the St Charles River. To the left, the little minarets of the General Hospital poked into the sky, amid tenement houses and the smoke of industrial Quebec, and to the right the shipyards, where we had seen the minesweeper *Gaspé* launched, are busy building more ships somewhere near the spot where Jacques Cartier launched the first all-Canadian-built boat in the summer of 1535. Now this district supports the shipyards and works, power houses, transport shops, the railway station, storage buildings,

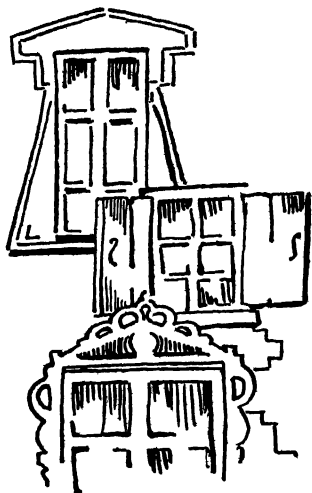


all the necessary adjuncts of a city, and through it runs the long French shopping street, with big stores selling everything from marble tombstones to chocolate pastiles. Not needing a tombstone at the moment, we

went to Paquets to buy some of the chocolate pastiles. These are a specialty of the nuns of the Trappistine Convent at Levis over the River, and can be procured by writing to the Sisters, enclosing some money. For anyone with a liking for plain chocolate, unsweet and wholesome, these

round pastiles of thin blackness are a treat. Having bought a supply, we went nibbling on our way to the Island.

It had begun as a grey day, but when the bridge to the Island was near, the sun came out and glistened on the damp steel, turning the graceful span into a fairy-like web spun across the swift-moving St. Lawrence. This fairy feeling fell away at the toll gate, but no one could grudge a toll to the gates of the past, and the present is still the past on the little Island of Orleans. Small, only forty-two miles all round, it holds enchantment at every turn of the road—its houses with elaborate casings about deep-set watching windows that view the amusing gardens full of cosmos and onions, zinnias and onions, phlox and, well, yes, onions! the variety being stressed in the ornamental, rather than the useful, part of each garden. The village Churches dominate the rural scene, and the little processional chapels along the roadside between villages are delightful. And the tiny dead houses in tomb-thick cemeteries look like miniature chapels, but their congregation is of the dead. All during the winter months, when the ground is stone hard, the bodies lie in the chapel, awaiting

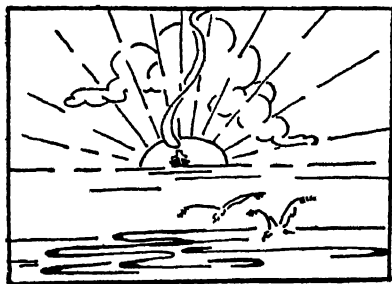


burial, and when spring opens up the ground, they are set in the good earth among the generations of the past. Rather a sombre thought for this lovely autumn day, with the first scarlet leaf appearing in the maples and a crab-apple tree, resplendently rich in fruit, bright against the whitewashed wall of a blue trimmed cottage. To-day autumn, then winter, and the little, quiet dead houses.

The living colour of the Laurentians across the River broke triumphantly across this mood; the hillsides ripe for harvesting, the churches with the silver painted spires, and the incredible living blue of the mountains as a backdrop, to-day's picture soon took one's thoughts from the peaceful dead to the living present.

The St Lawrence River is a placid looking-glass here on the north side of the Island, not the raging, flood of storm water off Tadoussac, or the clay-coloured purposeful stream of Montreal docks. Here the reflections of the twin towers of Ste. Anne de Beaupré on the north shore of the mainland make still reflections and the impression is of a lake, rather than of a river. On the south side of the Island it is another story, for there the ruffling deep-water channel is marked with bright scarlet buoys, bobbing to-day in the wash of a great white *Empress* ship, outbound for the Old Land, her world-known flag whipping at the mast, and a shimmer of steam haze above her yellow funnels. I was to see that beautiful white ship again, in the fateful September of nineteen-thirty-nine, only a few days before Britain declared war, speeding down that same river channel, outbound from the security of these

inland waters to an unknown destiny. Her passenger list quartered, her officers a trifle grim, everyone on board hoping for safe harbour with a tightening of the nerves at the not impossible thought that a submarine might be awaiting them. That voyage, there were a number of rather important people aboard, people whom the nation needed, and who were rushing back, still hoping that they would not be wanted, but feeling in their hearts that the time had come. Standing on a tiny half-moon beach below the village of St. Petronille that late August afternoon,



as the wash of the *Empress* broke up the sand, I wondered, not for the first time, who would give safe sailing to that ship, and all the other ships, great and small, in Canadian waters, if war came in a day, or a week? To-day that beautiful white *Empress* is a dirty

grey painted monster, zigzagging across the dangerous seaways, a grim symbol of the un beauty of war.

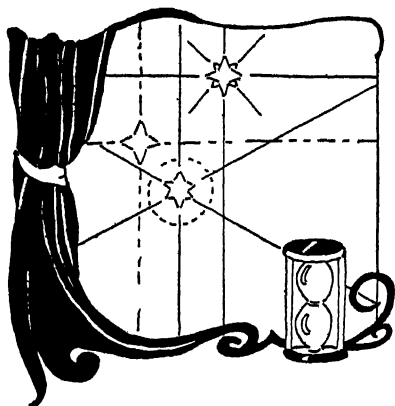
The wash on the beach has died away, and I realize that it must have been hereabouts that the Hurons found refuge from the wars of the raiding Iroquois in the sixteen-hundreds. Here at the spot where the St. Petronille Hotel now stands was the camping ground which the Jesuit Fathers gave to the fugitive Hurons. Within sight of the cliffs of Quebec they thought to be in safety, but

such was not the case. The relentless Iroquois scorned the defences of the white man on top of Cap Diamond, and paddling silently past the settlement, broke upon the unsuspecting Hurons and massacred them in hundreds. The danger of Indian raids was very real on the Island until a comparatively late date, and all the settlers built with the idea of repelling attack. Stout stone walls, feet thick, still stand to prove the excellence of the workmanship of the early settler. The grist mill at St. Famille, its round tower as solid and its small windows as watchful as ever, laughs at the years, and works a full day even now. Of course, many things are much older in Europe. Many are the houses and mills still in everyday use there that were built long before the mill at St. Famille. There is an inn in Winchester, England, that was built in the time of William the Conqueror, around 1070, where one sleeps in low rooms whose ceilings are held up by oak beams hewn by Saxon builders. Holyrood Palace in Scotland, where King George and Queen Elizabeth stay when they visit Edinburgh, was a busy, bustling place, full of intrigue, religious fanaticism and a beautiful Queen of Scots about the time that the first white man was sailing a square-rigged ship across the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The wharves at St. Malo were old when Jacques Cartier outfitted his ship for the first voyage to Cathay, little knowing that his explorations would change the face of the world.

Although we speak, throughout this patchwork book, of the ancient things of Quebec, it must be remembered that everything is comparative, even time, and the build-

ings on the charming Island of Orleans are indeed old in the comparative history of the New World. In this way, the Church at St. Pierre is old, even if Notre Dame in Paris would call it a fledgling, but in 1716, when it was built, the ways of civilization were still fairly new, and the villagers were proud of having the first large Church on the Island. And what loving thought they put into the making of every portion of their place of worship.

No expense was spared; the statues were to be carved by the Levasseur Brothers, famous all over New France for their wonderful work. The decorations were to be done by Vezina, and no one else. As well as these great men, André Paquet and Pierre Emond were to be entrusted with the other sculptural dec-



orations, and Emond was one of the most remarkable sculptors in wood ever turned out from the Art School that Bishop Laval started up St. Joachim way. The parish of St. Pierre was to have the best of everything that the artistic life of the times could offer, and the best in wood-carving at that time was very good. So one day in the year 1710 all the village people, their friends and relations, gathered at the new Parish Church of St. Pierre and St. Paul for the first mass.



What an animated scene on the slope above the River! Perhaps it was a little gusty, the River breeze blowing the priest's vestments as he walked in solemn procession all around the outside of the building, blessing each corner, north, south, east, west, the bell in the tower, the wrought-iron cross on the steeple, the step before the great front door. Did the blue incense smoke blow in the eyes of little Batiste, making him forget to swing the new golden censer? And did his cousin Jules kick him on the shin to point out the error? And did old Madame Pouliot, sitting just inside the door, swoon with excitement and have to be carried out and laid in Marie-Joseph Gagnon's bullock cart? *Aie de mi!* What doings at the blessing of the new Church at St. Pierre. And what junketing afterwards, with Curé himself carving the marvellous pink ham, that used to be the prize porker of Grosselin's farm, and all the parish sitting there under the apple trees, eating. Look at the food on the trestle table under the poplar. (That poplar grew from cutting of a cutting of a cutting that was given to the Great-grand-grandfather of Pierre by Sieur de Champlain himself, in Quebec, in the old times.) Madame has just put out a barrel of home-brew beer, and here comes Marté with one of her special *fromage raffiné* that she sells, and for a good price, mark you, as far away as Quebec, where the Seigneurs buy it for their dinners. Later everyone has had enough to eat, even the brother of Emile Turcotte who is always hungry, and it is now that Old Grand-père Fillion will tell a tale. Perhaps the one about the great earthquake, and the devils riding in the

clouds at Les Eboulements, or the one about the Buried Treasure up around St. Joachim?

"Once upon a time the Devils, flying over Les Eboulements on black wings, said to each other . . ."

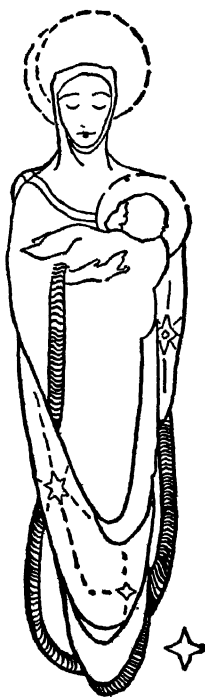
In the dusk the teller ends his tale and the listeners, enthralled anew at the well-known story, sit momentarily silent.

"Well told, my son, well told." It is the Curé speaking out of the shadows. "Now tell the story of the Blessed Virgin and the Child, before we go about our homeward way. It is fitting that this great day should end in thoughts of Heaven, and in thanksgiving for the blessing of our own Parish Church."

"Of a certainty. The story of the Blessed Virgin, the Flower, and the Child."

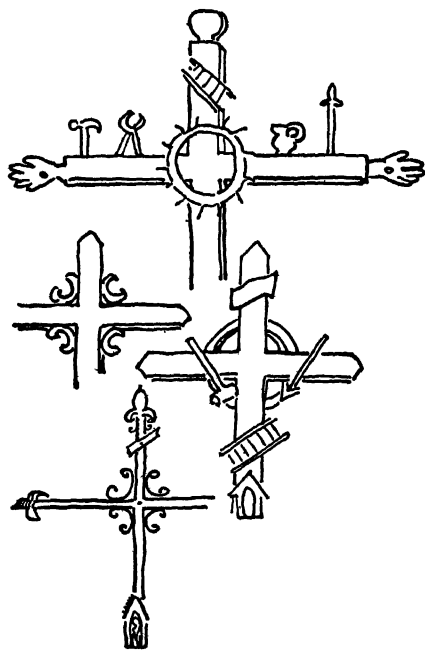
Grand-père Fillion's old voice dies away in the dusk of the early seventeenth-hundreds.

To-day there is still *fromage raffiné* (Refined cheese), one of the strongest-smelling cheeses on earth (the "*raffiné*" being an understatement)! The recipe for the very popular cheese is a heavily guarded secret among those who make it. Handed down from mother to daughter for over two hundred and fifty years the *fromage raffiné* recipe is



an heirloom. The pink hams of to-day are just as luscious, the story-tellers are still as graphic, and the new Parish Church of St. Pierre is even more charming now, with the bloom of the years upon its simple beauties.

So it is with all the Parish Churches on the Ile d'Orleans. Most have been restored, or rebuilt, at different times. Particularly is this noticeable in the new Church of St. Laurent, the parish immediately across the island from St. Pierre. These villages are joined by a legend and a long road; exactly half-way along the road stands a cross, and there is a story about it.



The two parish priests of St. Laurent and St. Pierre, decided to exchange their sacred relics. It seemed fitting to them that the relics of St. Paul, which were in the Church of St. Laurent, should go to the newly-named parish of St. Pierre-and-St.-Paul, while the relic of St. Clement should be given in exchange to St. Laurent. The affair was carried

out with all due ceremony, processions from both parishes passing along the road until they met, exchanged the relics, and each returned home. Unfortunately a parishioner of St. Laurent, with undoubtedly good, but rather mixed ideas, stole the relics of St. Paul back again from St. Pierre parish, put it in its old place in the Church, and there a surprised parish priest found it. A tremendous upheaval convulsed the villages, and the affair was taken to the Bishop of Quebec. After inquiries, and a long trial, the Bishop decided that the priests were in the right and that the old relics must be returned to their newly allotted churches. A procession of the faithful was to be formed in St. Laurent; with due solemnity the priest was to take his position at the head of his flock, and, carrying the relic, was to process slowly along the road until the St. Pierre procession was met. There the much-travelled stolen relic was to be given to St. Pierre, and the processions would return, each to its own village. All this was done and the globe-trotting relic of St. Paul now rests in the Church of St. Pierre-and-St.-Paul, and the relic of St. Clement in the Church of St. Laurent. The road, with the cross exactly half-way along, is always known as "The Road of the Priests".

\* \* \*

Driving along the road a processional chapelle to the right demanded attention. A miniature church in itself, with broad doors, and a tiny cross-crowned spire, the shining white-washed stone of its walls gleamed against the

background of blue water and bluer hills. On the low step some pious soul had put a pot of scarlet geranium. Red, white and blue, the Tri-colour of France, the Union Jack of Britain, and the predominating colours of the Island of Orleans.



At St. Famille, again the woodcarvings in the Church are very fine, and led one to wonder why there is so much inferior small carving seen in the stores and gift "shoppes" about the province. I always expect to see the tell-tale little mark, "Made in Japan" on the stands of the strangely almond-eyed old women, standing among sus-

piciously bambooish bushes, looking, I take it, for almond-eyed old *habitant* men coming home from the paddy fields of the Laurentides! There is much good work, little gems of forceful knife work, simple, strong, and truly characteristic of the virile French-Canadian art, for this is still a profitable craft. To-day, as yesterday, the woodcarvers of Quebec are master craftsmen.

When the British ships came so surprisingly up to the Island of Orleans that summer of 1759, and anchored off the parish of St. Laurent, General Wolfe, himself, came ashore to see his declaration to the people posted. Upon the door of the Church was nailed a now famous historical document. The old parish priest, with heroic but peaceful intentions, had written before he fled, asking the "Brave soldiers of the English Army" not to destroy his Church or burn the presbytery, adding, with true French politeness, his keen regrets that the too-early spring had deprived him of the pleasure of giving the General the first fruits of his garden. Wolfe was so touched by this simple epistle that he gave orders that nothing was to be damaged. Even without "the first fruits of the garden" he was magnanimous and fortunately the "brave English soldier" in this case both read and spoke French.

\* \* \*

About the Island the colours of the houses are even more varied, and brighter, if possible, than those down



the North Shore. How about a nice quiet colour scheme for your new home? Say, jade-green front, red sides, and a

white trim? Not cheerful enough? Then perhaps this would suit: white front, scarlet sides, green, yellow and royal-blue door, with yellow and green window frames in front? Personally we liked the patriotic homestead done in whitewash, red roof, one of the chimneys blue, the other plain red brick, and all the trimmings pale blue. These are not figments of the artistic imagination, but actual Better Homes and Brighter Living, Ile d'Orleans style.

Through St. François, the aged verger was cleaning out the Church, his yellow and black checked shirt cheerfully blatant against the graceful grape vine carving of the pulpit. He conducted us with some aplomb to the massive enclosed pew on the right wall.

"See that?" he said polishing the shining wood surface of the rail.

"Yes, we have been wondering what it was."

"That," he lowered his voice impressively, "is His Worship the Mayor's pew."

I do not know what the population of St. François may be but the whole Island, including the parish of St. Jean, numbers under five thousand!

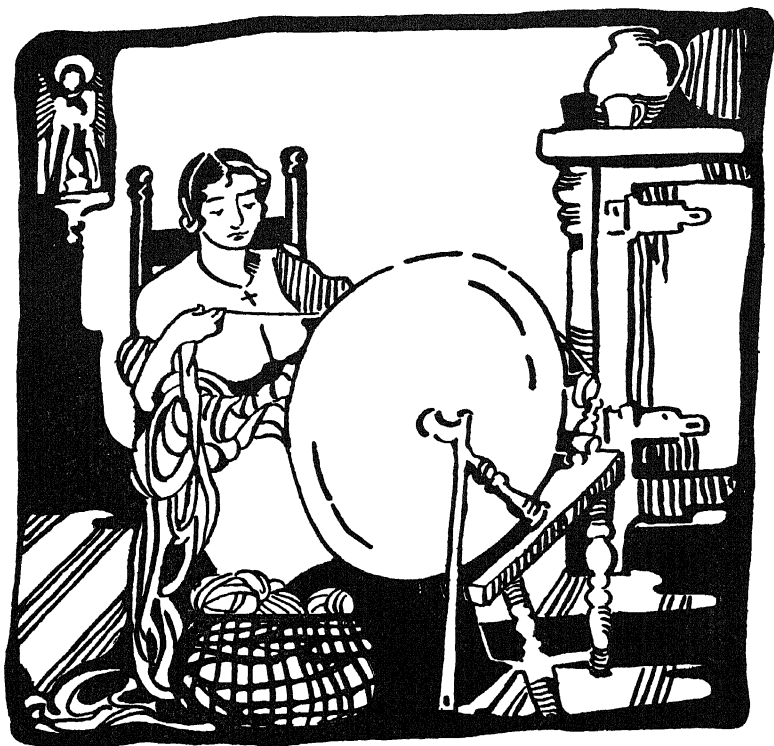
Driving through St. Jean we almost missed the Manoir Mauvide-Genest. On the very roadside this large restored Manoir lives again, to shelter the remaining members of an old family, and to delight visitors to the Island. We stopped, just to look at the delightful door and the windows, as this was obviously a private house, and occupied. The door opened and Madame Pouliot came down to greet

us. Apparently one can see all over this very remarkable house buying the historical book written by the late owner, Judge Pouliot. It is not a few cents; nor is it the usual florid guide book, it is a mine of information presented, obviously in translation, from the French, with conciseness and despatch.

Inside the Manoir one is taken about by Madame, through the house itself, the little chapel built on in such perfect accord with the original house, and finally up to the third storey loft. This is a truly fascinating place, full of an almost unique collection of domestic implements. Tools of all sorts, spinning wheels, looms, pots, pans, ladders, period furniture, pottery, all in juxtaposition to the huge old hand-adzed beams, and the tall roof springing steeply up above the general conglomeration of things to delight the heart of any French-Canadian antiquarian. When the Judge bought the old Manoir and reconstructed it so lovingly, he gave new life to a dying house, and new interest to the domestic history of the early seventeenth-hundreds.

. Our difficulty being the lack of time, we really had not the chance to see all there was to see. A party of charming Americans, with one fidgety member possessed of a wrist watch, did not help the contemplation of historic things. After all, the Past takes time, and nobody knows the Future these days, so why rush into it? But I can safely say that that wretched jewelled wrist watch spoils the brief hour's magic for all the party in the old Manoir Mauvide-Genest, at St. Jean.





There is a large rock standing out in the mouth of one of the little island rivers, just where it runs into the St. Lawrence, and behind this cover in a past time lay a band of raiding Iroquois. They saw a party of white men coming in canoes and made ready their scalping knives. As the canoes drew near, the captain of the little party was explaining that it was necessary to warn his brother-in-law, who was away hunting in the woods, that news of Indians coming down the River had arrived at the settlement, and that the hunting party must return at once. At the mouth of the little river the whooping Iroquois sprang from behind the rock, massacred all the would-be warning party, and the only man saved from the disastrous encounter was the brother-in-law who took back the news to St. Jean. The tragic irony of the episode is commemorated in a living rock, with eternal water around its base. Later, another war brought another strange episode to the island. Just before the Great War some Germans negotiated for, and paid an instalment on a farm near St. Laurent. The farmer was more unsuspecting than the Secret Service, apparently, for when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police started asking questions, the Germans gave up farm-owning so suddenly that they had no time to get the deposit back. The farmer thus became that exception that proves the rule, the man who ate his cake and still had it!

The Iroquois raided the Island at times, and the Huron and Algonquin sought refuge there; Bishop Laval owned it as his Seigneurie in the early days; and General Wolfe

captured it. Now, it is a small peaceful island of villages named for the Saints, of farms, and Parish Churches; of summer residents, artists, and tourists in season.

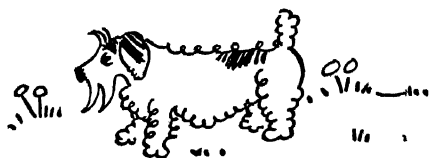
We completed the full circle round the island to St. Petronille, and, after tea in that beautiful house, set in Italian gardens, rising sheer, terrace above terrace, from the River, we made our reluctant way back to the fragile-looking bridge. On the way across we saw an Anglican clergyman that we knew, and the full beauty of Montmorency Falls. Even from Kent House, on the edge of the cliff, the Falls seem like just some more water; seen from the Ile d'Orleans bridge on a silvery summer evening the Falls are a shimmering veil of enchantment. Such was the stillness that the thunder of the water could be heard distinctly, and a bird twirping somewhere overhead. From the left, upstream, the deep-throated roar of a liner under the cliffs of Quebec, brought us back to the Present, and to the undoubted fact that people should not day-dream in the middle of the bridges, no matter how fairy-like the span, nor how ethereal the evening.

## SACKCLOTH—MILL OF GENTILLY

WE HAD been looking for some likely stream in which to wash Dogdog. Not that he had rolled in antiques again, but his animated crankcase service had been working overtime, and he was a mass of oil.

At Gentilly we found the stream, shallow-banked, clear, a completely desirable dog bath; and beside the upper waters, an old mill.

Thick, white-washed stone walls, deep-set windows and a nobly pitched roof, it stood as it had stood for almost three hundred years. A survival of the Seignorial regime, it is working to-day as it did in the days of New France.



The great grinding stones are still there, but to-day's mill has water-driven turbines instead of the romantic, clanking mill wheel. To-day

new grains are pounded to dust in the big mill loft, and new money changes hands beneath the black beams of the roof. Generations have come and gone, but outside, the mill stream babbles an Indian or French-Canadian song as it hurtles through the new turbines; sings as it did in the time of the first mill wheel; sings even as it bears the oil of Dogdog down to the St. Lawrence! A good-tempered

stream, old in the ways of man, it has the character of a loquacious old *habitant*, smiling in the sun.

Coming to the mill door, we found it hospitably open, and stepped into the grinding loft. The afternoon sun, sloping through the deep-set windows, showed a million atoms of grain dust floating in the air, and as the miller walked towards us, a nimbus of iridescent dust outlined his slim figure in an almost mystical manner.

There is nothing unduly mystical about the miller, though. A young French-Canadian countryman, it had been his ambition since childhood to own the mill of his native village. Driven by this great ambition, he left his green river-side and went to the United States to work in the huge flour mills, there to learn his trade, and, also, to learn English. Wages in the States were good and to the thrifty, ambitious French *habitant* lad they brought realization of dreams. In four years a modern miller returned to the ancient mill, bought it, and took a favourite sister from the ancestral farm to keep house in the rooms above the storage chambers. The mill stream chattered with pleasure because the new owner was a Michel of Gentilly.

"I knew his Gran'mère and his great-great-Gran'père,  
And his first, far-off Gran'mère from a bride-ship of  
France"

chanted the stream.

"Spring sowing  
Summer growing  
Autumn reaping

Winter sleeping—  
That's life"

said the mill stream  
philosophically, looking  
back round the  
corner of the centuries.  
"But thank le  
Bon Dieu the new miller  
is a man I know.  
I'd just about flood the  
place if a stranger  
came to the mill—



"Spring sowing  
Summer growing—"

Down to the Great River flowed the chattering waters.

\* \* \*

The sound of a reverberating sneeze woke me out of reveries, and I was surprised to find it belonged to me! A dusty mill floor is no place for hay-fever addicts.

The miller called up the broad ladder stairs and his sister came down, a blue-frosted girl with a gentle voice and no English. We all went out into the garden, half-way up the hill behind the mill. There we found the little, black "cherries" that we had seen in the paper bags of the jumping wayside vendors at La Valtrie, sampled a handful, and spat vigorously as the alum-like juice drew our tongues—an extraordinary sensation, when unexpected. The whole scene, especially the "spit" delighted

the Michels, who were chewing up great handfuls of the revolting black knobs. Cosmos, marigolds, wild briar, chickweed, turnips, Montreal melons, cabbages, and tall tobacco flourished exceedingly, and onions flourished more "exceedingly" than everything else.

On the top of the hill we were shown the new mill dam, the modern cement almost obliterating the old grey stonework of the original retaining wall. From the hill-top, Gentilly lay spread before us, much as it must have been in 1784 when it became a parish and had a priest of its own for the first time. That first resident priest found his people on well-established family farms that had been handed down for almost a hundred and twenty years, since Michel Pelletier, the first Seignior, allotted the wilderness to his retainers in 1669. What did this first Seignior charge in "*cens et rentes*"? The "*cens*" means money, but the "*rente*" was produce. "A fat fowl of the brood of May", or "one sound fish from out every eleven caught". And it may have been the Seignior of Gentilly who charged "one *minot* of good wheat" to every farmer, and caused it to be ground in this white mill, nearly three hundred years ago.

Standing on the new cement dam, looking over the black roof away towards the harvest fields of Gentilly stretching to the River, patterned with shipping, we seemed to have a bird's-eye view of three centuries of progress, compressed into one picture, from the old mill, through the farm lands to the great ships, outbound, down the St. Lawrence.

Our host insisted that we go upstairs and see the home.

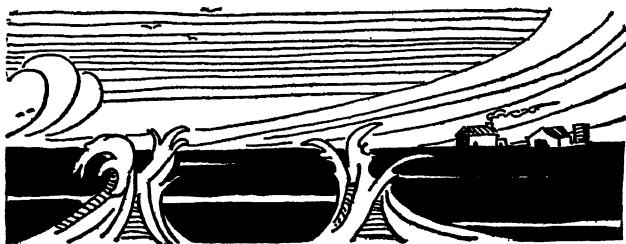
Up the broad, rough-hewn stairs we went, onto a landing with a blue and white painted *armoire*, the landing door guarded by a round medal of the Virgin and Child, and into the kitchen-living room. Flooded with sunshine coming through the deep-set windows, the huge whitewashed loft sparkled with freshness. The old, old planking of the floor was scrubbed to the colour of parchment, with hand-hooked rugs making bright splashes of colour before the shining black stove. A checked cloth on the table and a jug of marigolds showed the housekeeper instinct, and another painted *armoire* along one wall had a row of bright plates on top. Little Sister almost disappeared into this vast piece of furniture and returned with a Montreal melon, ripe and sumptuous. Sitting in the two Windsor rockers, we wallowed in that ambrosial fruit, fresh from the garden. Never will I eat Montreal melon again without thinking of that cool kitchen, the ancient black beams frowning overhead and the sunlight reflected from the mill stream making silver patterns on the whitewashed walls. All this comes back with the hot scent and lush noisiness of Montreal melon.

Robin and Dogdog went a-haying in a field just beyond Gentilly. Dogdog came back rather suddenly with a brood of furious, white hens at his immediate rear, but Robin spent ages with the hay-makers. Just as we were about to pull out onto the road again, one of the browned young farm-hands came running up and gave Robin two crumpled dollar bills—he had found them in the field, obviously dropped out of Robin's pocket. We rewarded



his small daughter suitably, and drove off to the wavings of many hands and cheery adieux.

The road follows the River through old French Seigniories, and the land seems to show the work of many generations of toil-worn hands. Fields of grain running down in narrow strips to the River banks; the harvest mostly cut and stooked now, with the threshing machines clanking



in many farmyards. Robin got out and became involved in a threshing gang. The men were very matey and though not one had a word of English, spatters of laughter rose above the engine noises as Robin waved his hands and shouted French-Canadian at them. The boss let him feed some grain into the maw of the machine, much to the disgust of a serious, small boy, whose job it was to cut the string on the sheaves before they were fed onto the moving band. He felt that this inclusion of a stranger in so serious a business as threshing was asking for trouble. Nothing happened, however, and Robin returned with a cat-that-ate-the-canary expression, a smile on his dust-smearred face, saying that he had wanted to do that all his life; so presumably he got rid of a psycho-

something among the noise and dust of a threshing gang.

Rambling along, we stopped to watch a tiny new colt wobbling about a new world. Further on, a woman in gaudy pajamas stood picking flowers by a typical farm cottage. She did not look like a summer visitor exactly. Perhaps she was the local vamp? Every other female seemed to be in the fields picking tomatoes, or digging potatoes, and had probably been there since daybreak.

Tomatoes, tomatoes and more tomatoes—being picked, being packed; being home-canned under orchard trees; a red avalanche of over-ripe tomatoes thrown down a gully; tomatoes fed to the cows. rotten ripe in heaps in the farmyards; trucks laden with hundreds of baskets for the Montreal markets; more truckloads for the canneries, and finally, inevitably, a tomato sandwich for lunch.



Great-grandmamma is putting up tomatoes in the open-air kitchen, while Great-grandpapa is laying out long tobacco leaves to dry, smacking his toothless gums in anticipation of long winter evenings, when the pun-

gence of the "*tabac*" fills the hermetically sealed kitchen and the old pipe gurgles contentedly. The "*tabac*" is nearly harvested now, and the racks are full of wilted green leaves in the first stages of the native-curing process.

Passing through a village, we saw another Auberge, but we were still in the dry belt, so passed it with averted eyes.



Continuing towards Sorel, the road follows the pattern of the St. Lawrence, and we stopped on a cliff top to count the ships in sight. A huge Canadian Pacific *Duchess* outbound; a Cunard-White Star passenger ship inbound; a laden tramp steamer, low in the water, ploughing along the edge of the channel; a skinny tanker down stream; two small lake boats with paper or pulp, going up from Trois Rivières, through the Richelieu River and into New York; a ferry, like a busy water beetle, bustling past a vermillion-painted dredger in mid-stream, and, in the distance, two grey hulls that might have been anything.

At St. Gregoire stands an old grist mill, staunch and sturdy. Doubtless it was built by the Seigneur, and all the tenant-farmers brought their grain to be ground here. If they all came at the same time, it must have been a gay scene, with the miller working over-time, and the settlers having a day off for a change. Of course, one must watch the miller to see he didn't take more than his fair share

of the flour, and then there was the tithe for the Seignior to put apart, but on the whole, there was time for a gossip, and to hear the latest story from Quebec. "And have you heard the tale of the daughter of the Seignior de Verchères? *Mon Dieu*, what courage! Of a certainty, the most brave! Alone, see you, in the house of the Seignior de Verchères, her father, away up towards Montreal; that is, so Jean Ba'tiste says; for me, I have not been so far up River—too near the Iroquois, say I. But this girl, Madeleine de Verchères, mark you, alone but for men, an old woman and her two little brothers, is attacked by hundreds and thousands of painted Iroquois. What? Well, perhaps not quite so many, but truly a lot, who rush from the forest upon the workers in the fields."

The listening peasants shiver, knowing too well the horror of that blood-curdling war cry, the silent rush of the savages, and the still, bloody corpses of their dearest kin lying out in the trampled crops.

"But what of this Madelaine? *Mon Dieu!* That Madelaine, she runs up to the palisade, the Indians chasing at her very skirt, calling as she runs to all the soldiers in the fort 'To arms, to arms', and she knowing, see you, that not one soldier is inside. Herself she slams the palisade gate on the nose—Ha! Ha!—the very nose of those Iroquois. The men are for blowing up the powder for, say they, the *canaille*, we are lost, we are of a certainty dead.

"'Never', says their mistress. 'By the good Ste. Anne, I swear we will outwit these heretic savages, until my father returns.'"

The dusty miller calls from the door of the mill.

"Hi, Pierre Joseph de Annabelle, your turn has come!" The raconteur leaves the gaping crowd and his story to attend to his business. In time he re-appears, powdered with white, shaking out his smock and sash.

"What of the Demoiselle de Verchères?" cry the waiting crowd.

"But yes. The young girl—did I tell that she was but fifteen summers?—is of a bravery tremendous. For three days and three long nights she parades around the top of that palisade, shouting orders to many people, changing the guard, beating off attacks by running from place to place on the wall, the men with her all firing off volleys until, truly, the Iroquois think the fort is full of soldiers. One time, mark you, Madelaine sees coming to the Verchères landing stage the canoe of their good neighbour. He has his wife and the new baby with him. *Sacré Virge!* what will she do? The Indians are all in the forest hidden; the neighbour, he does not know."

"*Mon Dieu*, she does not go out?"

"She goes out, Madame Coté, and brings the party safe inside the fort. Untouched. For why? The Indians think 'Ah, it is a trick of the paleface woman and we will not go out.' And so it goes for three days and three dark nights, until all are exhausted. But Madelaine, she will not rest or sleep and says always, 'Courage, mes braves, we will be rescued', and so it is, for on the fourth day, an officer arrives with his soldiers and saves the people of Verchères. The gentleman is so surprised when it is a so

young girl that comes to his bugle call that he makes the speech most gallant, saying that the fort could not be in hands more good than those of Mlle. Madelaine de Verchères, and he tells of the story to all his friends, and even down to Quebec to His Excellency, the Governor, and my Lord Bishop, and up to Montreal, for all the world to hear."

The crowd of *censitaires* breaks into excited talk as the tale ends. "Of a surety, it is a marvellous thing that the daughter of the Seignior de Verchères has done." "Surely her name will go down in history, like Jeanne d'Arc, who was so brave in war, and also a young girl."

And the name of Madelaine de Verchères has come down to the present generations as a heroine of the dangerous days—a bright thread in the earth-toned tapestry of the Seigniories.

\* \* \*

Most of the houses hereabouts have icon-like medals hung over the front door. Blessed Virgins, all the Saints, and many Holy Families, protect the cottage and must surely have lent protection to the gardens too, for they bloomed in colourful profusion. Wells with huge pole-sweeps supply the water, and one garden well, surrounded by a mass of hydrangea in full bloom, had a wheel overhead rather like a windmill. All was very picturesque amid the flowers, but I thought of some poor woman ploughing through the snow in sub-zero winter, standing in the icy wind pulling a bucket out of the depths of that well, and

felt thankful for the unromantic Hot and Cold!

And so Sorel, but I can't think why. It is a dreary little town of some industrial pretensions, but it looked drab in the early evening greyness. We had an uninspired meal in the hotel there and argued about where we would stay. The night had happened rather suddenly, due to another thunder cloud, and here we were, in an hotel the design of whose meals and linoleum we disliked.

In the last of the dusk we ran out onto a dark road and into unknown blackness, further complicated by torrents of thunder rain. After inquiries at various oil stations and hot-dog stands, every one of which, said they, and no one else, had the perfect accommodation for trailers in their back yards, we eventually saw a notice "Camping 50". With one weary accord we said, "Let's try here and get settled anyway," and drove off the road into a bumpy pitch blackness. Apparently it was a field. An ancient man appeared out of the dark; yes, we could stay, it was fifty cents; the house and a store were over there; he waved a hand at some distant lights and drifted off. We turned in, neither knowing nor caring where we were, and slept.

## HESSIAN—RICHELIEU RIVER SONG

NEXT morning we found ourselves parked on the edge of eternity! Nothing but some sapling willows stood between us and a sheer drop into the River fifty feet below. Apparently the Ancient Man was so near death himself that he had not thought it necessary to warn others away from its clammy clutches! We backed up.

Later, we walked on the hard, sandy beach below and threw stones for a delighted Dogdog. The River was sparkling blue this morning, and two yachts flew before a stiff breeze across the ship channel. It was a lazy morning, and the first whip-scent of autumn made one want to clasp every shred of a fleeting summer. The little shop across the road provided some stores, and also a new acquaintance

A figure in immaculate flannels, accompanied by a pretty little girl, was leaning on the counter, talking to the woman in charge. The child made for Dogdog (very white and angelic this morning), and that started a bilingually animated conversation on dogs in general. Madame behind the counter was all for useful dogs. This didn't "faze" Dogdog at all, he wagged an ingratiating tail. The man hastened to say that some small dogs were very useful, and intelligent, too. The child was sitting down on the step patting the useless white terrier. She tempted him with a cookie, but his soul was in the



ice-box. Madame still opined that a dog should be of use, and that led to tales of huskies in the North land, and the immaculate man gave us some hair-raising Jack London-plus-Rex Beach experiences from his life in the Bad Lands. The icy cold, the whistling wind, some howling wolves, the northern lights—they were all there, inter-



persed with igloos, kayaks, dark-eyed Esquo-misses, and incredible mushes over tremendous distances to inaccessible Mounted Police Posts with dying pals in the throes of scurvy, pneumonia, malaria, beri-beri or leprosy, as the story demanded. We sat enthralled. We marvelled, applauded or shuddered as the tales unfolded in all their thickly ornamented beauty, but mainly, we marvelled.

By lunch time, we were practically frozen to our seats, and the icy blasts of the unrelenting Arctic still whistled round our ears. Calling our husky to us, we mushed through the blinding glare to our trailer, pushed into the ice-box, with awful difficulty dug out a bottle of beer, and, just in the nick of time, swallowed a few drops of the fiery liquor. We were saved!

After the privations and hazards of the morning, we ate a hearty lunch, laughing until the horrors of the Arctic became a wild frenzy of delight.

"What did he take us for?" I gasped.

"Heaven knows. Probably English visitors."

"I loved the bit about the huskies getting frostbitten feet, so he put them all on the sleigh and dragged them into camp!"

Laughter filled the trailer. Later we walked over to the store again and found Madame knitting behind the counter. We mentioned the amazing travels of the immaculate man.

"Oh, him," said Madame, "he's crazy; he writes books." The sound of her busy needles covered our retreat.

There is another grist mill near Contrecoeur, with its back to the jade-blue River, turning wheel and weather-cock the same as in the days when the



Seignior took the tithe of all grain ground inside the stout stone tower.

We saw a poverty-stricken lady from Montreal gathering mushrooms in a field, with her chauffeur assisting. We nearly stopped and offered to buy some, but the chauffeur was a very large sort of man, so we didn't!

In looking for the Richelieu Valley turning, we missed the way, wasting some time beating about the roads, and we felt distinctly ruffled until we got to a lovely village of grey stone watching the days pass in tranquil contentment.

We chose the road to the west of the River—not for any particular reason, but because we rather like the blue roads on the map. The red roads are so often terrifyingly efficient and unromantic!

The Richelieu, as it was that day, flowing serenely under blue skies, is a different thing from the dark Rivière Iroquois bearing the war canoes of the bloody-handed Indians down upon the settlements; or the spring-time Rivière Chambly, reflecting the scarlet coats of French soldiers in its newly opening water holes, or the midnight Rivière Sorel, secretly floating refugees in over-loaded *Bateaux* downstream, away from the American-Indian raids of the late seventeen hundreds. This River has had many names in the course of its history, and that history is redolent of bloodshed and sudden death. But to-day in the waters that formed the main Iroquois war path, are reflected peaceful villages, the tall, silver spires of churches soaring into a blue sky, and children in small, leaking

boats, punting fearlessly about tree-shaded shallows, happy, unscared, and unscalped.

The road by the winding waters is good gravel, the tree-grown edges unhung with *Tapis à vendre*, uncontaminated by hot-dog stands, and we found it generally charming. There were pond lilies in the River shallows, and green banks dozing in the heat of an August afternoon; the buzzing of many bees and, in the distance, a threshing machine. Suddenly, a blast from a ship's whistle, an unexpected sound up an inland river, until one remembers that this is the route for the lake boats from Canada to the United States. The navigation channel here seems very narrow, with tall marking poles sticking up in the stream to show the inland mariner where the deep water lies. It all seems very complicated, but to the initiate it is doubtless quite easy. We know a man who is Captain of a ship that takes cargo from Ottawa to New York; a strange inland journey of locks, basins, canals, rivers and, finally, lakes, for the Richelieu River rises in Lake Champlain.

Champlain must have been an amazing man. Imagine his journey up this River in 1609. Only a small party of alien white men, surrounded by suspicious Red Indians, pushing, paddling, portaging, up an unknown waterway into an unexplored wilderness of undreamed of potentialities. Rapids and shallows, islands and bends—on they went, always feeling the eyes of strange men upon them, and hostile eyes at that. I wonder if it was just plain curiosity that held back the fierce Iroquois, rather than any

great diplomacy on the white men's part? The natives were notoriously curious, and it must have intrigued them enormously to see the extraordinary clothes that these interlopers wore; coats with silver buttons, strange contraptions on their heads, with feathers totally unlike the Indian feather headdresses. And these palefaces did strange things with strange instruments—bang! bang! from a long tube, and a man was dead; flick! flick! with a stone and a rod of iron, and they made fire, and the Big Chief of the palefaces looked through a magic instrument at the sun, evidently making big medicine—but nothing ever came of it, though the red guides watched every minute of the time. Anyway, the Iroquois let Champlain through, and were fairly friendly, until they came to the Chambly Rapids. There, his guides said, lived an evil spirit that devoured those who tried to pass. Eventually Champlain induced them to try the steaming waters, and with much difficulty, tugging, towing and portaging, the little party got up the River. On July 4th they came out into that great sheet of water that is the source of the Richelieu River, and named it Lac Champlain.

The Ottawa, St. Maurice, Montmorency, the Saguenay and the Richelieu, with numerous smaller waterways, flow into the St. Lawrence flood before it reaches the ocean, making a water system of tremendous importance, the real "liquid assets" of the province.

It is surprising to remember that Champlain realized this in 1609, having discovered it in the face of unknown natural hazards, and only too-well-known Indian compli-

cations. There must be something tremendous within these early explorers, a drive and fearlessness that carries them over unthinkable obstacles, and a vision that can see far ahead into the uncertain future.

St. Antoine, the birthplace of the French-Canadian statesman, Cartier, whose statue stands on the river's edge, looking up at the home village in surprised immobility, boasts a lovely old house, obviously a *manoir*, and, as obviously, the family were in residence, or we would have poked our inquisitive noses in the delightful door.

There are old stone houses all along the riverside hereabouts, built at the time of the seigniories that were granted to the officers of the Carignan Regiment. These were perilous lands in the early days; deep forest behind, and the Iroquois main highway flowing dangerously past one's very doorstep. Even the Fort at Chambly sometimes proved insufficient protection to the first hardy settlers.

Fort St. Louis de Chambly was begun on St. Louis Day, 1665, by the soldiers sent out from France, including twenty companies of the famous Carignan Regiment, who were to leave their stamp forever on the life of French Canada. These trained soldiers, accustomed to wars but



untrained in the ways of the wilderness, built the first wooden palisade, with storehouses inside and living quarters for the garrison, on the same spot where the large

stone-walled Fort stands to-day. Upon this historic point of land the fighting history of all North America is concentrated. The French, the British, the American, and the British again, have hoisted their own particular flags to their martial music. The sound has faded into the silence of time, but the music of Chambly Rapids sings on from century to century, secret and unchanging. And that great volume of white water will still be sweeping on when our little hour of human history has been trampled under the heel of the inevitable future.

Fort Chambly to-day is impressive. Its size is unexpected in an outpost fortification, until one remembers that this place has been of tremendous strategic value ever since it was first built. Then, it was to hold the fighting Iroquois from destroying the infant settlements further down the Richelieu and St. Lawrence Rivers, and to provide refuge for the settlers in time of danger. In the first days of the British conquest, it was occupied by British troops, but was later taken by the Americans, under Montgomery, in 1775. The American Army, using the old Iroquois trail, came from Lake Champlain, down to Sorel on the St. Lawrence, and so to Montreal, which they occupied, and to Quebec, where they were defeated. At the time of the resistance of Quebec, in the last days of 1775, all the main towns and most of the River were in American hands. Montgomery planned the fatal attack on Quebec from his headquarters in Montreal. Trois Rivières was under the American flag, the St. Lawrence waterway was practically useless to the British above Quebec, and

things looked uncertain for British interests in Canada. The American Army had excellent lines of communication through the Richelieu and Fort Chambly, and that route was a much easier one than the overland trail from New Brunswick that Arnold took to get to Quebec for the same fatal fight. After the death of Montgomery under the cliffs of the Old City, the Americans abandoned the Fort at Chambly, having first burned everything, leaving only the four walls. They left also, in the old cemetery, the body



of a very gallant officer, General John Thomas, who had died of smallpox, contracted during his medical work among the garrison. Possibly it was just as well that the old buildings were burnt to the ground, for in the light of present-day medical knowledge, it was the best possible provision against the infection of the incoming garrison, friend or foe. And it happened to be foe. General Guy Carleton, commanding in Quebec, rebuilt the Fort within the year, but, though the war continued, the sphere of conflict was removed further south to Lake Champlain and the Hudson River. Never again was the old Fort actively engaged in any conflict.

Troubles continued, and rival parties skirmished



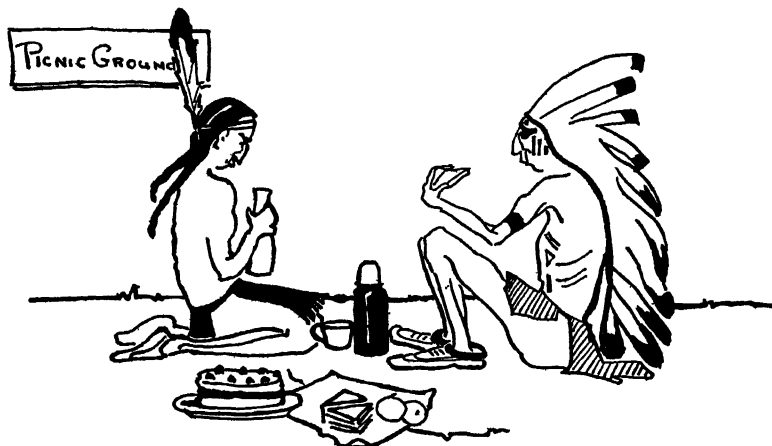
across the country that is now the International Border, taking and losing, advancing and retreating, marching and countermarching in a ragtime of warfare until 1814, at which time the English-speaking countries of the Americas compounded their differences and settled down to the peaceful relations that we cherish to-day.

There were many prisoners held in Chambly, and to-day the "Don-jon" where some of them languished may be seen. "Don-jon" is a delightful word; so gloomy, so profound, and utterly melodramatic, preparing one for the worst; but this "Don-jon" is really quite habitable, as dungeons go—fresh air, lots, directly off the creaming waters of the Rapids, seating for a thin man on a stone wall shelf, and the chance of spitting at the sentry through the door as he stands in the tiny vestibule to the cell!

Across the square from the "Don-jon" stood the men's quarters, and at right angles, the kitchen. A touch of poignancy shows in the old bake ovens against the massive walls of the Fort. The domestic arts and war went side by side in the wilderness, in an ever recurring pattern of Canadian pioneer life. Guns and bread, guns and bread, a marching refrain across the continent from sea to sea.

Upon a towering wall, frowning down in belligerent strength, a white notice points to a postern door in the thickness of masonry. "To Picnic Grounds", it reads. We felt it was more than thoughtful of the garrison to provide picnic grounds for the Iroquois, but apparently this is not an historical notice like the "Don-jon" or the ones

that say "Arsenal" and "Chapel". But it is a pretty picture, to think of the Iroquois bringing out their sand-



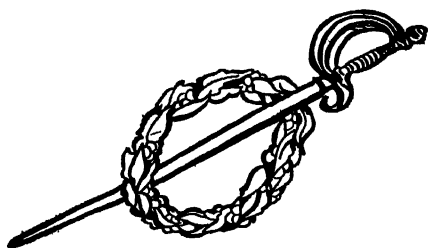
wiches and picnicking outside the Fort in carefree savagery!

Across the road is the old cemetery, sheltered by its huge willow tree, and with the two commemorative stones planted in the grass—a peaceful spot in a war-torn two acres. One tablet bears the fine inscription:

"Here lie in the peace of Our Lord  
the mortal remains of the men  
who, underneath the walls of this Old Fort  
gave their lives for their country."

and beyond, on a rough boulder, is a tablet saying:

"In memory of General John Thomas  
An American Officer  
Born in Marshfield, Mass., 1724



Died of Smallpox, June  
2nd, 1776

And other American Sol-  
diers buried in this ground.  
Erected by the Saranac  
Chapter

Daughters of the American  
Revolution, Plattsburg,  
N.Y., 1925."

The French, British and American ghosts walk side by side beneath the willows on the banks of the Richelieu at Chambly Rapids.

There are two small relics in the museum of the Fort, just rough blocks of wood with uneven lettering carved into the weathered surface, one says:

"General Thomas  
de l'armée  
Americane  
Décedé le 2 Juin  
1776

the original marker of the General's grave. The other relic, of grey wood, says simply:

"Deux Enfants  
Massacre par  
Iroquois  
le 22 Mai  
1747

and was found over a grave containing the bones of the two little children and their father, all massacred. And what of the mother? A pathetic little picture. And to-day, the birds build in the old gun ports, their twittering

shrill above the water's sound, and the Fort rests on its varied laurels.

It is surprising to think that Red Indians were scalping white settlers so late in history as 1745. In England at that time, the second Jacobite Rebellion was just over, and heartbroken Scottish gallants in torn tartans were fleeing with their defeated Prince, Charles Stuart, to France. There, a dissolute Monarch and his extravagantly vicious Court were laying the foundation for the French Revolution. In New England, the third generation of the Pilgrim Fathers lived on their abundant farmlands in peace and piety, while up to the north in Canada, savage red men were swooping down the Richelieu River and murdering little French children playing by the Chambly Rapids.

Chambly is now a comfortable little town, bustling about its business, and it is difficult to feel the wars and despairs of the early days. But the carefully kept records show something of the town's beginnings, and a census was kept as far back as 1681. It was about that time that one Pourrier had ten acres of land, a gun, two *pistoles*, three horned cattle, and five children. Obviously, a man of possessions. I wonder how he divided the one gun and the two *pistoles* among the five children? The cattle would multiply (unless the Iroquois got them, of course), but how did he manage to apportion the weapons? It is a grim thought that possibly the same Iroquois got some of the children too, like the Deux Enfants mentioned before.

In a less troublous and more recent past, a child was born in a brick house facing the River at Chambly Basin, and was christened Emma Lajuenesse. To-day that house is called Villa Albani, in honour of one of the greatest singers of all time, Madame Albani, née Emma Lajuenesse of Chambly, Province of Quebec.

William Henry Drummond has taken the story for one of his famed French *habitant* poems, and tells it thus:

"Was workin' away on de farm dere, wan  
    morning not long ago,  
Feexin' de fence for winter—'cos dat's w'ere  
    we got de snow!  
W'en Jeremie Plouffe, ma neighbor, come over  
    an' spik wit' me,  
'Antoine, you will come on de city, for hear  
    Ma-dam All-ba-nee?'"

"'W'at you mean?' I was sayin' right off, me,  
    'Some woman was mak' de speech?'"

but his friend explains:

"'Non—non . . . Excuse me, dat's  
    be Ma-dam All-ba-nee  
Was leevin' down here on de contree, two mile  
    'noder side Chambly.'"

and he explains to Antoine that Madam has just arrived at "Kebeck" after many triumphs abroad, but in spite of the fame and applause

"'Somet'ing on de heart bring her back here, for  
    she was de Chambly girl.'"

\* \* \*

"'Wall,' I say, 'you're sure she is Chambly,  
    w'at you call Ma-dam All-ba-nee?'"

Don't know me dat nam' on de Canton—I  
hope you're not fool wit' me?  
An' he say, 'Lajuenesse, dey was call her, be-  
fore she is come mariée . . .'

and that explained the thing  
to the unbelieving Antoine.  
So the two *habitants* went in-  
to Montreal and heard Ma-  
dame Albani sing, and found  
it all rather highbrow, until  
she sang an old French chan-  
son about "*de poor leetle  
small oiseau*" and that  
pleased Antoine very much.



It reminded him of hearing a robin singing outside the  
window, and "Ma-dam she mus' lissen lak dat too, w'en  
she was de Chambly girl!"

"Cos how could she sing dat nice chanson, de  
sam' as de bird I was hear,  
Till I see it de maple an' pine trees an'  
Richelieu ronnin' near,  
Again I'm de leetle feller, lak young colt upon  
de spring  
Dat's jus' on de way I was feel, me, w'en Ma-  
dam All-ba-nee is sing!"

So on this occasion the home town girl made good in her  
own town, and became the exception to that rule about  
"No man is a prophet in his own country." The great  
Albani was even good enough for her own people in the  
Canton of Chambly!

# SAMITE—AMONG THE SAINTS

**A** LUSH crop of whiskers fringed the wayside this Saturday morning, every male face was ripe for harvesting. Picture the country this evening, one vast froth of shaving soap, with Sunday's "Shining morning face" emerged self-consciously from the fallen piles of week-old beards.

"There was an Old Man with a beard  
Who said, "It is just as I feared  
Two owls and a hen  
Four larks and a wren  
Have all built their nests in my beard."

At St. Mark, a crowd of men and boys gathered in a farmyard arrested our attention, and we stopped. A cow was being auctioned off. This was obviously a big excitement in the village, but in no time every small boy had deserted the cow in favour of our trailer. Inquisitive noses flattened against the windows, and breathing heavily, the youth of the village passed judgment on our home—and apparently found it wanting, as they all went back to the cow.

Funny, miniature croquet courts seem to supply the sports atmosphere to the landscape, and we saw dozens of people of all ages and both sexes knocking balls about with small mallets, to the accompaniment of delighted

shouts, particularly when the ball flew off the court into Aunt Genevieve's gladioli bed!

Apparently this road is not much used by tourists, for we saw no "foreign" licence plates, either American or Canadian, only the Quebec cars going about their accustomed ways.

Stopping for a picnic lunch, we took a bottle of beer and another of ginger beer and anchored them in a cool backwater among the yellow lily heads, we looked at maps and got out sandwiches, and in due time took the ice-cold bottles from the river's cool embrace. The spirit of the countryside took hold of us. The beer and the beauty and the buzzing of the bees, the lapping of lily-trimmed water, the afternoon heat; all joined in a drowsy dream, and we slept.

\* \* \*

It was just as well that we had "restored ye bodie with sweet sleepe" because, soon after starting again, we found ourselves among the Saints, and the Saints didn't like us. St. Jean failed to supply any candy bars, which embittered my lookout; we missed the right-hand turn to Beauharnois, but eventually caught up a St. Blaise signpost and started on an incredibly zig-zag but indubitably saintly, cross-country drive. Through St. Edouard and St. Michel to St. Remi, who evidently did not like the look in our eye, because he provided a wrong turning, and we found ourselves at St. Isadore, whom we would willingly have missed. Back on our tracks to St. Urbain, on to Ste. Mar-



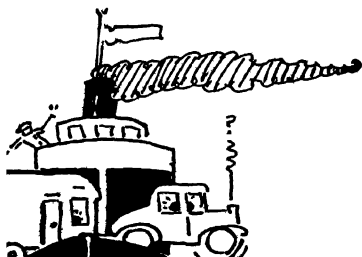
tine. One would have thought a female Saint might have had some kindness of heart, but it was at Martine's place that the thunder started, no lightning or rain, just hot, sticky, noisy thunder. Also, we got lost again, and brought up visiting with St. Philomene. Here the village turned out *en masse* to see us turn the trailer in a narrow backyard. Can one be bedevilled by Saints? I believe so, for by this time we were so unnerved that Robin backed the trailer into the side veranda. I apologized to the owner and got severely told off for my pains, then we hit a tub of hydrangeas, and finally the local undertaking establishment before we bolted under cover of the thunder.

We stopped in Beauharnois to get some provisions. Why, I can't imagine, for the few shops left much to be desired, especially the meat market. Repulsive bits of very dead cow hung dejectedly on nails and museum pieces of various animals' interiors lay on a table among limp lettuce and energetic blue flies. I bought a tin of bully beef.

In Beauharnois, a sharp shower broke over us as we passed the famous Power Development Plant. It had been chasing us about among the Saints all afternoon, and now they sent it to drown us once for all!

If you are touring, don't take this road from Naperville to Beauharnois; it is not worth it; go some other way to the Valleyfield ferry.

Like all ferries, the Valleyfield one was at the other side.



We settled down to wait. We waited, and after that we waited some more. The storm passed, leaving choppy little waves on the River, and a stiff breeze blowing downstream. A small boy arrived, opined the ferry would be coming soon, and went home to supper.



The ferry arrived, riding skittishly on the waves. The ferry was twenty-eight feet across, and we were twenty-nine from front wheels to trailer middle wheels. That was that. We did not fancy the trailer's tail flapping in the breeze about two yards over the edge of the deck, so, despite the contempt of the captain, we trundled up

the wharf again into the dusk.

We were very annoyed, and blamed it all on the Tourists Bureaus, quite justly. They had told us that this particular ferry was capable of taking a car and trailer, we had wasted two hours waiting for it, and now found the information both inaccurate and useless. Unfortunately, this is true of most trailer data in the province. No one seems to be worrying about the possibilities of trailer-conscious tourists, and the necessary information on roads, bridges, hills, camping facilities and, of course, ferries, is not adequate. We swore.

Some miles further on we decided that the best thing to do was make for the American border at Fort Covington and go over into Ontario. It had been intended to cross the river and stay in Quebec Province, but that seemed impossible unless we turned back almost to Montreal, crossed the bridge and went around by Ste. Anne de Bellevue and Veaudreuil. Incidentally, we had crossed the main road leading to the bridge at St. Philomene during our saintly journey, but had shunned it, trusting in our simple way to the tourist information we had so annoyingly believed.

Progress was slow, and very soon we realized that night travelled faster than we did, and again we were without a parking place at dark. Interminable winding roads stretched before us, at first with hedges in view, then rough land, plentifully pitted with water holes discourag-



ed the idea of parking. After all, one must have some idea of the ground before running a car and trailer into unknown pastures. Finally, when it was quite dark, and the stars overhead winked derisively, we made out a sign, something about boats for hire and fishing and so we turned down a narrow lane, then left into a farm road, and so to a farm-house surrounded by tall trees. A light burned in the kitchen, and the sound of radio dance music came from the shadows down by the river somewhere. We got out stiffly, and met a genial French-Canadian host who assured us we could camp on his land, and led us to a row of tall poplars.

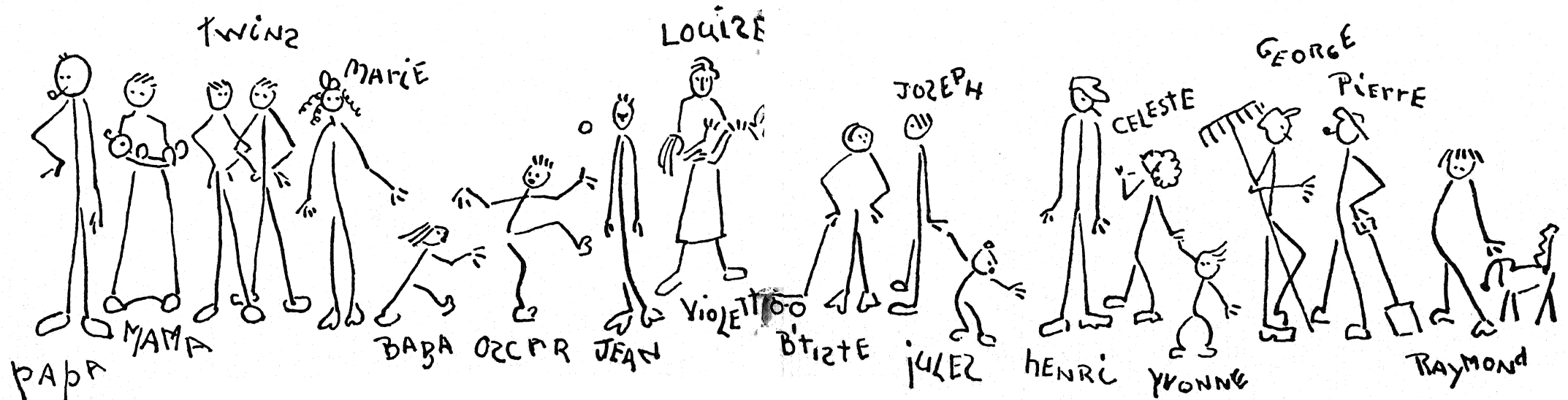
"*Voilà,*" he said with pride. "*Si belle et très comfortable.*"

We took his word for it, as we bumped over a knobby field in the wake of his swinging hurricane lamp, and came to rest beside the softly whispering trees. That was all we knew of St. Anicet (obviously a more hospitable saint this time!) until the morning.

A brilliant, faintly crisp morning got us out early, to find a charming place. The old farm-house stands on a promontory jutting out into the St. Lawrence main stream to the right, and a small bay on the left. The poplar leaves rustled and the waves gurgled among the tall reeds, and a sense of peace came to us with the sound of the church bells across the water at St. Anicet.

A great commotion began in the farm-house; a feather of smoke trickled lazily out of the tall old chimney, the back door flew open and mine host, scarcely recognizable

in a black suit and bright brown boots, slicked, shaven and polished, made a dignified way to the barn. Sounds came from within, followed by dense clouds of black smoke, and an aged Ford car. Meantime the commotion in the house had increased an hundredfold; windows were slammed shut, the stove stoked; water got from the yard pump by a junior member of the firm, was turned into the huge aluminium kettle and clattered onto the stove; one final yell from Madame, "*Vitement, vitement, mes enfants*" sounding like the battle cry of Boadicea, and the whole family debouched from the door in one never-ending avalanche. Fascinated, we watched the multitude get into the Ford, and admitted that the age of miracles is certainly not past. Mamma heaved in (she was a massive matron) beside Papa, while little Francis-Xavier (Lord help him) was jammed in between them; untying the string-draped rear door, the eldest daughter got decorously onto the seat, followed by the twins, who sat on each other, the tall Jean-Batiste-Alphonse carrying six-



year-old Camelion-Louis, and finally Aunt Martine, mercifully a small old lady, was insinuated into the last corner, and the rear door was tied up again.

"*Allons, nous allons,*" cried Papa, rather optimistically, we thought, but he knew his car, for with a nerve-shattering crash of gears, it leaped forward. The family unable to move a hand in farewell, yelled "*Au 'voir, au 'voir,*" and another French-Canadian *habitant* family were off to early Mass in the silver steepled Church across the water.

Once we had a French friend whose reaction to almost anything in life was summed up in the one ejaculation "Formidable", and this was certainly a formidable sight that our eyes had seen. Nine assorted people in one historic Ford car!

*Sunday morning in Quebec* — a fitting theme upon which to end a Province Patchwork.

The bells are ringing out from scores of silvered steeples over the Saint-named villages, millions of candles

flickering and the *habitant* families setting out to early Mass. The immemorial pattern of French Canada Sunday starts with the excitement of rushing off to Mass in one's best clothes (Aunt Berthe always wears the pin with the piece of real coral on it that her fiancé gave her before he got drowned at Shute au Blondeau thirty years ago last Corpus Christi). Then comes dinner, and what a dinner—pea soup and pork, mark you, and squash from the river patch, and potatoes, and melon! And cream now that the cow has freshened again, thank the Saints. What a dinner!

After dinner the visiting begins, with whole families of relatives arriving in buggies, by motor truck (Cousin Alphonse does market trucking) by rowboat (Great-uncle-Henri-Bergeron runs the local ferry) or on foot. (The Pierre Laviolettes live next door along the road, and the Pierre Paul Laviolettes live next to them, and the—but why worry?) All the Laviolettes come on foot, except Jeanne Blanche. She comes in a horse buggy, borrowed from Old Man Bois *dit* de Bois at the store, because she had her first baby last Tuesday and says she feels tired. Great-grandmother Beauchemin says in her day there was none of this pampering. Horse buggy forsooth! When Great-grandmother had her seventeenth at harvest time, she was out helping Great-grandfather in the fields three days later. Wait, says Great-grandmother, until Jeanne Blanche has her seventeenth, and there won't be all these goings on. Horse buggy indeed!



No one listens to the aged mutterings, which are drowned in the hubbub of domestic noise that increases with every new arrival. This is the vivid scarlet thread of blood relationship, the most brilliant on the *habitant* loom. Always the talk is of the land, the crops, the harvest, breaking more land to the plough. On Sunday the farmers talk of the land, look at their land, stand on their land, feel it with horny hands, even pick Béb   Batiste out of mud holes in it, but they do not work it. Except at harvest time Sunday is a different day. In the cheerful din that continues until evening all the news of the countryside is exchanged to the soothing creak of rocking chairs and the accompaniment of much highly skilful expectoration.

Again the bells ring out calling the Angelus from the silvered belfries of the village Churches, echoing across the valleys and hills of the whole Province, weaving the Papal Purple thread into the earthly background of the Homespun, and the day of rest is almost over.

The Church, the Family and the Land, designs repeated to infinity, interwoven, intermingled, rewoven for ever, in the simple, but enduring fabric of Quebec.



## THE FINISHING

THE Patchwork is finished. Gloriously inconsequent, it spreads its miscellaneous motley between the covers of this book, a light-hearted memento of many moods, beside deep waters and high hills, the oldest hills in all the world. Out of nothingness came the Laurentian Mountains in the throes of an evolving world. Possibly the rhythm of "Old forgotten, far-off things" impregnates the very airs about the Laurentian slope even to this day, imparting that indefinable essence of immutability that is in the charm of the *Provence*, and slowing the progress of life to conform to the timing of the Pre-Cambrian days.

Before the slime gave up its troglodites, before the dinosaurs and those silly animals with flat feet, before the Neanderthal Man, or that other evolutionary climber, the Piltdown Man, before even you and I (which seems incredible!) the Laurentians lay along the unknown latitudes ready to become the backbone of the earth—above the mud and slime of evolution, evolving, in their own good time, the St. Lawrence, the Cliff of Quebec, the glowing maple trees and the *habitant* Farmer.

Now the blue hills have caused to evolve a Patchwork book (which may or may not be on a par with that silly animal with flat feet that evolved in pre-historic times), which just goes to show how the bulk of first-class evolution is falling off in this day and age!



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| F. O. CALL          | <i>The Spell of French Canada</i>             |
| EDWARD LEAR         | <i>Nonsense Rhymes</i>                        |
| GEORGE GALE         | <i>Historic Tales of Old Quebec</i>           |
| W. T. WAUGH         | <i>James Wolfe, Man and Soldier</i>           |
| BLODWEN DAVIES      | <i>Romantic Quebec</i>                        |
|                     | <i>Saguenay, the Deep River</i>               |
| G. M. WRONG         | <i>Rise and Fall of New France</i>            |
| J. CAMILLE POULIOT  | <i>Quebec and the Ile d'Orleans</i>           |
| ISABEL SKELTON      | <i>The Backwoods-Woman</i>                    |
| ALPHONSE LECLAIRE   | <i>Le St. Laurent, Historique, Legendaire</i> |
| SIR JAS. M. LEMOINE | <i>Harbour History of Quebec</i>              |
|                     | <i>Legends of the St. Lawrence</i>            |
|                     | <i>Maple Leaves</i>                           |
| G. W. BROWNE        | <i>The St. Lawrence River</i>                 |
| DEPT. OF HIGHWAYS   | <i>Along Quebec Highways</i>                  |
| J. M. McMULLEN      | <i>History of Canada</i>                      |
| T. H. RAND          | <i>Treasury of Canadian Verse</i>             |
| MARIUS BARBEAU      | <i>Folk Songs of Old Quebec</i>               |
|                     | <i>Quebec—Where Ancient France</i>            |
|                     | <i>Lingers</i>                                |
|                     | <i>The Kingdom of Saguenay</i>                |
| J. E. WETHERELL     | <i>Three Centuries of Canadian Story</i>      |
| W. S. GILBERT       | <i>Bab Ballads</i>                            |
| SELLAR AND YEATMAN  | <i>1066 and All That</i>                      |
| A. G. DOUGHTY       | <i>A Daughter of New France</i>               |
| PIERRE BOUCHER      | <i>Canada in the Seventeenth Century</i>      |
| HELEN PALK          | <i>Pages from Canada's Story</i>              |
| GRACE Z. STONE      | <i>The Cold Journey</i>                       |
| JOHN MURRAY GIBBON  | <i>Canadian Folk Songs</i>                    |
|                     | <i>The Scot in Canada</i>                     |
|                     | <i>Canadian Mosaic</i>                        |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| WM C. H. WOOD          | <i>In the Heart of Old Canada</i>                |
| M. CATHERWOOD          | <i>The Romance of Dollard</i>                    |
| CLARENCE WEBSTER       | <i>Wolfiana</i>                                  |
| HISTORIC MONUMENTS     | <i>Old Manoirs and Houses</i>                    |
| COMMISSION OF P.Q      | <i>Les Vieilles Eglises</i>                      |
| CLAUD GOLDING          | <i>Cavalcade of History</i>                      |
| WILLA CATHER           | <i>Shadow on the Rock</i>                        |
| WILLIAM KIRBY          | <i>The Golden Dog</i>                            |
| SIR GILBERT PARKER AND |  |
| C. G. BRYAN            | <i>Old Quebec, a History</i>                     |
| M & C H. B. QUENNELL   | <i>History of Everyday Things in<br/>England</i> |
| M VICTORIN             | <i>The Chopping Bee</i>                          |
| LOUIS HÉMON            | <i>Maria Chapdelaine</i>                         |
| W. H. DRUMMOND         | <i>The Habitant and Other Poems</i>              |
| ABBÉ DESPRES           | <i>Louis Hébert</i>                              |
| E. C. WOODLEY          | <i>Canada's Romantic French Heritage</i>         |

























UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



138 742

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY